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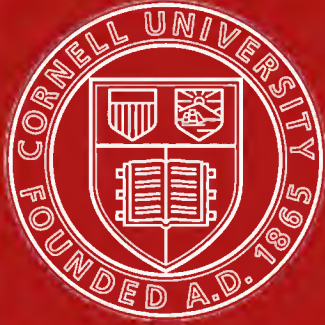


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**The University Press Shakespeare**



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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
IN FORTY VOLUMES

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*Editor's Autograph Edition*

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LIMITED TO TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY SETS  
FOR SALE IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND  
OF WHICH THIS IS NUMBER 62

*The Cambridge Text and the Globe Glossary are used in this edition through the courtesy of the Messrs. Macmillan.*

*The annotations at the foot of the page are intended to explain difficult phrases or allusions. Single words, which are no longer in common use, appear only in the glossary, which is printed in Volume XL.*

*The numbering of the lines follows that of the Cambridge Edition.*





BY THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

CLAUDE A. SHEPPERSON

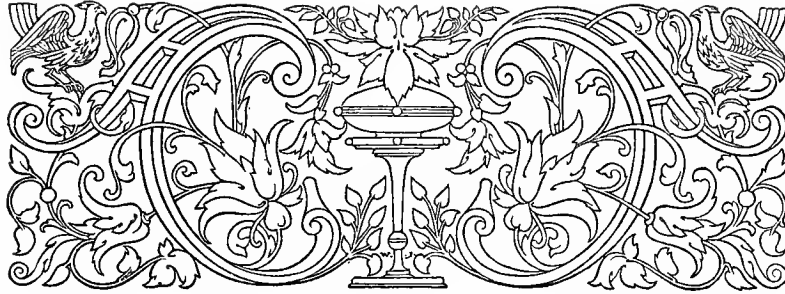
*LUCIANA.* "Fie, brother! how the world is changed  
with you!

*When were you wont to use my sister thus?"*

ACT II, SCENE II, line 151.







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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND  
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
BY SIDNEY LEE

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VOLUME I

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THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY EDMUND GOSSE  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY CLAUDE A. SHEPPERSON



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NEW YORK GEORGE D. SPROUL MCMVII

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

BY SIDNEY LEE

### I



OMER and Vergil, Dante and Cervantes, Milton and Goethe, are the only writers known to human history who in universality of recognition challenge comparison with Shakespeare. Obviously in the work of every one of these six masters there are certain qualities to which Shakespeare's writings offer no parallel at all. In Shakespeare's writings we seek in vain for the epic simplicity of Homer, the epic majesty of Vergil, the metaphysical fervour of Dante, the serio-comic narrative of Cervantes, the epic sublimity of Milton, the philosophic subtlety of Goethe. On the other hand, Shakespeare's achievement reveals an opulent mastery of one faculty,—the faculty of dramatic expression, of instan-

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taneous revelation of the springs of human conduct, — to which his peers on the heights of Parnassus were for the most part strangers. In many of their peculiar excellences, too, Shakespeare outshone his peers too conspicuously to admit of any questioning of the fact. He can be more spontaneous in description than Homer, more solemn in reflection than Dante, more piercing in satire than Cervantes, more searching in introspect than Goethe. No poet has been endowed with equally ready or equally complete command of language, having the triple virtues of simplicity, sensuousness, and passion. No author has sounded a more vivid or a fuller note of humour and comicality. Intimacy with the griefs and joys that sway humanity is an essential characteristic of all great literature. But no author has come within measurable distance of the fulness and certainty which marked Shakespeare's control of the sources both of merriment and pathos.

Apart from the supremacy of his intuition which governed the processes of his intellect and imagination, the cast of Shakespeare's genius differed in many notable respects from that of the genius of other giants in the world of letters. Its active exercise was not coextensive with the full term of his manhood. His life was neither cut prematurely short, nor was it prolonged to the limit of old age. Born in 1564, he died in 1616, having just completed his fifty-second year.<sup>1</sup> Notable precocity

<sup>1</sup> The general facts of Shakespeare's life are recorded in the present writer's "Life of Shakespeare." Detailed accounts of his various works appear in the various introductions which are prefixed in this edition to each of the plays and poems.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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cannot with confidence be put to his credit. His first play, "Love's Labour's Lost," may be assigned to the year 1591; his latest completed play, "The Tempest," with such portions as are attributable to him of "Henry VIII.," may be assigned to the year 1611. He was of the comparatively mature age of twenty-seven years when his career as dramatic author is positively known to have opened, and he was forty-seven years old when it closed. It is probable that the whole of his dramatic work as we know it was begun and ended within that period of twenty years which formed the midmost period of his adult career.

Unlike many eminent poets, through nearly the whole era of his activity Shakespeare produced great work — not spasmodically nor at uncertain intervals, but with the utmost regularity, at the methodical rate of two plays a year. Nor did he exhaust his powers by undue exertion before he died. He always economised his energy. From first to last, from "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and the "Comedy of Errors" to the "Winter's Tale" and "Tempest," it was his habit to borrow his plots. Though he freely altered and adapted the borrowed stories to suit his sense of artistic fitness, he did not spend labour in inventing his fables; he sought them in such accessible sources as Italian romances, the biographies of Plutarch, or the popular English history of his day — Holinshed's Chronicle. Always carefully husbanding his resources, he ceased to write when his powers were at their ripest. His last five years were spent at leisure and in retirement. A

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luminous sanity inspired the conduct of his life no less than that of his work.

Many other phases of his literary career are exceptional and rivet the attention. Shakespeare was at one with the common run of men in acquiring greater knowledge of the world—greater knowledge of practical affairs as his years grew. His experience in this respect was not distinctive. But his progressive work is characterised by much beyond increased command of merely practical or worldly wisdom. No author's work offers clearer evidence than his of the steady and orderly growth of purely poetic faculty, of imaginative and dramatic insight. The approach of age, so far from quickening, often tends to impair such qualities as these. It may be that in the minor currents of Shakespeare's productivity,—at times in his metrical effects and more often in the mechanical construction of his plots,—ebb as well as flow of faculty is discernible. But in a survey of his complete achievement, the feature that overshadows all others is the steadiness with which his poetic, artistic, dramatic power marches forward to perfection. There are signs of haste in the composition and design of his late as well as of his early plays; but these are inconspicuous straws in the mighty stream of his potentiality, which is always moving onwards, always expanding, always deepening.

It is a commonplace of criticism to detect in sequels of great books a falling off, a diminution of excellence. Shakespeare's work affords no opportunity for such observation. It was his frequent practice to resume in later



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life a theme that he had treated in earlier life, but whenever his work takes that direction he improves on his first endeavour. Having treated with success one epoch of Roman history in "Julius Cæsar," he shortly afterwards handled the succeeding epoch in "Antony and Cleopatra." Great as is the mastery with which he handled in his first Roman tragedy one mighty crisis in Rome's affairs, it is far inferior to that which he exhibited in the second Roman tragedy which dealt with a second mighty crisis. Finely balanced and penetrating as is the picture of Cæsar's murder, it is outstripped in dramatic intensity and dramatic grandeur by the portrayal of Antony's fate. The fantastic emissary from the spirit world which Shakespeare drew from the contemporary world of popular mythology and embodied in early days in the Puck of "Midsummer Night's Dream," engaged his pencil for a second time near the end of his working life, when he depicted Ariel in the "Tempest." The old character reappears impregnated with a wealth of imaginative colouring and a philosophical significance (suggesting the capabilities of human intellect divested of physical attributes), which leaves the original creation by comparison little more than a bunch of irresponsible rogueries.

Naturally in his late work Shakespeare's hand is surer when he wrestles with complexities of human conduct, but it is especially memorable that in his final labours he showed a greater mastery of the simple as well as of the complex aspects of mortal existence. The freshness of the pastoral incident in "Winter's Tale"—the sheep-shearing feast—surpasses that of all Shakespeare's pres-

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entations of country life, whether we compare it with the experimental effort of "Love's Labour's Lost" or the mature effort of "As You Like it." The dirge in "Cymbeline" for native simplicity of thought and expression has no precise parallel in the lyrics of previous years. Even more important is it to note that his capacity to portray boyhood and girlhood, girlhood especially, blossomed in its full beauty when his career was nearing its close. The boy Mamilus in "Winter's Tale" and the two boys in "Cymbeline" embody far more convincingly the charm, originality, and innocence of masculine youth than the little Prince Arthur in "King John" or even Macduff's son in the more recent tragedy of "Macbeth." Nor until Shakespeare's life had reached its last decade did he make the attempt to depict tender, ingenuous girlhood, — girlhood uncontaminated by social intercourse, — girlhood as it was moulded by Nature's hand. The peerless portraits of Beatrice and Rosalind, belonging to his middle life, prove that youthful womanhood, as it developed amid those artifices and conventions which are inseparable from civilised society, had in Shakespeare's eye no lack of bewitching gaiety nor of appealing gentleness. But the tender, ingenuous type of girlhood — of girlhood untouched by the shadows of social tradition and social custom — lay outside the scope of his energies until the end of his days came in sight. Such a type he set himself to create for the first time in Marina in his late play of "Pericles"; he developed it in Perdita in "Winter's Tale," and he wrought its apotheosis in Miranda in "The Tempest." It har-

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monises with expectation that in middle age his temperament should have acquired an increased measure of gravity and new profundity of thought which should have guided him triumphantly to the topmost peaks of tragedy. But it is difficult to match in literary history the first emergence in a dramatic poet's latest work of a perfect recognition of the elemental and ethereal spirit of feminine youth and beauty.

### II

To Shakespeare's fertile imagination was linked a native alertness of intellect which made him the most accurate of observers of inanimate no less than of animate life. But his powers of invention and observation far from exhaust the range of his endowment. He was endowed in an exalted degree with a third power which is rarely absent from great poets and is constantly and conspicuously present in Shakespeare, — the power of absorbing or assimilating the fruits of reading. Spenser, Milton, Keats, and Tennyson (to mention only great English poets) had the like power, but none had it in quite the same strength as Shakespeare. In his case, as in other cases, this power of literary assimilation rendered more robust the inherent force and activity of both his intellect and imagination. The investigation of this exceptional capacity of assimilation requires a finely balanced judgment. Critics have sometimes credited Shakespeare with exceptional ignorance, even illiteracy. They have treated him as a natural genius, owing noth-

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ing to the learning and literature that came before him. That is a view which is contradicted by the external fact of his education at the Grammar School of Stratford-on-Avon, where the gates of Latin literature were opened wide to him. It is more plainly confuted by the internal evidence of his work, where his frequent debt to other authors for his plots and phraseology lies upon the surface. A more modern type of critic has gone to the opposite extreme, and has credited Shakespeare with all the learning of an ideal professor of literature. That notion is as illusory as the other.

The whole truth lies between these two extreme views. Shakespeare was an eager, a rapid, and a wide reader, but he was never a scholar; all that he read passed quickly into his mind, but did not long retain there the precise original form. It was at once assimilated, digested, transmuted by his always dominant intellect and imagination, and when it came forth again, it bore the stamp of his own individuality to a far greater degree than that of its source.

Shakespeare's mind seems to have resembled a highly sensitised photographic plate which need only be exposed for the hundredth part of a second to anything, be it in life or literature, in order to receive upon its surface a finished picture which could be developed and reproduced at will. If Shakespeare's mind for the hundredth part of a second came in contact in an alehouse with a burly, good-humoured toper, the conception of a Falstaff found instantaneous admission to his brain. The character had revealed itself to him in most of its involutions as quickly

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as his eye caught sight of its external form and his ear caught the sound of the voice. Books offered Shakespeare the same opportunity of realising human life and experience. A hurried perusal of an Italian story of a Jew in Venice conveyed to him the mental picture of Shylock with all his racial temperament in energetic action, and all the background of Venetian scenery and society accurately defined. A few hours spent over "Plutarch's Lives" brought into being in Shakespeare's brain the true aspects of Roman character and Roman aspiration. Whencesoever the external impression came, whether from the world of books or the world of living men, the same mental power was at work, the same visualising instinct which made the thing he either saw or read of a living and lasting reality.

### III

In point of language and metre marked differences are observable between Shakespeare's early and late work. These differences reflect with precision stages of the growth in force of his intellect and imagination. Metre gradually acquires a flexibility which enables it to respond with increasing effect and sureness to human feeling. As Shakespeare's mental strength developed his verse steadily emancipated itself from the hampering restraints of fixed rules of prosody and gained a lawless pliancy which few have ventured to imitate and none have imitated with success. In the blank verse of the early plays a pause is strictly observed at the close of

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each line and rhyming couplets are frequent. Gradually the poet defies such artificial restrictions; the constraint of rhyme is well-nigh abandoned altogether; recourse is more frequently made to prose; the pause is varied indefinitely; long speeches are met with in the "Winter's Tale" and "Tempest," in which the pause is set in every place in the lines except the end; extra syllables, in addition to the legitimate ten, are introduced at the close of lines, and at times in the middle; the last word of the line is often a weak, unemphatic, and unaccentable conjunction or preposition.

Similarly Shakespeare's language becomes growingly irregular with the progress of his work. His style develops new obscurities which are the fruit of the quickening pace of his mental processes and the advancing fertility of his imagination. Second thoughts, second fancies, crave expression before the first are completely expounded. The fulness of his ripened mind contrived to load his words with a weight of meaning almost greater than they could conveniently bear. In plays like "Pericles," or "Cymbeline," or "The Tempest," the reader is often left to supply elisions of phrase, which offer embarrassing testimony to the lightning rapidity of their author's thought. Shakespeare has been described as the least grammatical of writers, and the comment is not without justification. For many of the irregularities which puzzle the uninstructed reader, ignorance of the syntactical principles which governed Elizabethan English may be held responsible. But other irregularities owe their presence to complexities inherent in Shake-

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speare's perfected genius. Few writers at their maturity offer greater difficulties to the student, who seeks to interpret literary speech accurately or to paraphrase it exactly. Very close application, very constant study, is essential to a full apprehension of Shakespeare's latest compositions. But no literature repays study and application equally well.

### IV

The text of Shakespeare has engaged the close attention of many hundred students of high acquirements in many countries, and has proved a fascinating study.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's autograph manuscripts are not known to be in existence, and the relation which the printed text bears to his original writing is a question not easy to answer decisively. He did not prepare his dramatic work for the press. Plays in Shakespeare's day were intended to be spoken and not to be read. Shakespeare, like all contemporary dramatists, wrote for the stage and not for the study. His personal disposition may fairly be credited with exceptional modesty, and it is clear that he attached, like Goethe, — one of his greatest successors in the world of literature, — small importance to the fate of his written word.

Every student has to bear in mind that Shakespeare is not known to have superintended the publication of any of his plays. His dramas became, as soon as he had

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the formation of Shakespeare's text the student is referred to the present writer's introduction to the fac-simile reproduction of the Shakespeare First Folio, published by the Oxford University Press, 1902.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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written them, the property of playhouse managers, who usually deemed their value diminished by publication, at any rate until they had exhausted their popularity in the theatre. Yet Elizabethan publishers, who were governed little by respect for the rights or feelings of others, often obtained from the playhouses, by fair means or foul, transcripts of plays and then issued them in print, without a careful inquiry as to the authenticity of the "copy" or efficient typographical revision.

During Shakespeare's lifetime there were printed and published by contemporary publishers of habitual irresponsibility sixteen separate plays, beside the two narrative poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," and the "Sonnets," three works which stood on a footing somewhat different from that occupied by the plays and may possibly have been given to the world under Shakespeare's personal care. Another single play, "Othello," was published in the common way six years after his death—in 1622. All these pieces came to light in quarto form.

It was not until seven years after his death that his complete achievement issued from the printing press in the great First Folio Edition of 1623. That volume first gave permanent record to the full range of Shakespeare's work. It excluded one play, "Pericles," which had been printed (in quarto) during the author's lifetime, but no less than twenty dramas, of which the greater number rank among the literary masterpieces of the world,—nine of his fourteen comedies, five of his ten histories, and six of his twelve tragedies, — were for the



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first time presented to the reading public, were rescued from urgent peril of oblivion, by the promoters of the First Folio.

The responsibility for this first attempt to give the world a complete edition of Shakespeare's plays mainly lay with the publishers. John Heminge and Henry Condell, the managers of the company of actors to which Shakespeare had belonged in life, lent to the enterprise all the support in their power, and furnished all the "copy" that the playhouse archives afforded. But in 1623 more than thirty years had elapsed since Shakespeare had delivered his first manuscripts to the theatre, and in the case of the delivery of his latest work no less than twelve years had elapsed. During these long intervals misadventures had befallen the company's archives, and it was impossible to count on that storehouse for the supply of all the "copy" that was in request. Happily the promoters of the First Folio had at command transcripts of plays which had fallen into private hands, while the printed quartos offered them the more or less adequate text of sixteen pieces. But the authenticity of the "copy" which (from whatever source) reached the printers of the First Folio varied greatly. At times it had suffered unauthorised interpolation — at times it had suffered unauthorised abbreviation. Some of it was illegible. Yet, in spite of all typographical and critical defects, the First Folio is the sole source of our knowledge of the greater part of the Shakespearean text. The carelessness and ignorance of the printers, alike of many of the quartos and of the First Folio —

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their spelling vagaries, their misreadings of the "copy," and their inability to reproduce intelligently any words in a foreign language — have set no mean difficulties in the way of the Shakespearean scholar. But the opportunities of attaining full and satisfying knowledge of Shakespeare's writings must not be unduly disparaged. Many columns of the First Folio and many pages of the quartos can be perused uninterruptedly with understanding by the careful student of Elizabethan typography and Elizabethan English. Probably no more than one in each thousand lines presents really formidable obstacles to the expert reader's progress. And Shakespeare's writings were inherently of too fertile and too potent an excellence to suffer materially or permanently from the embarrassments or incompetence of those who first saw them through the press. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a long line of able editors set all but a few fragments of the original texts on a sound and intelligible typographical footing. The best results were embodied in the Cambridge edition, mainly prepared by Dr. Aldis Wright, and that version of the text is followed in the present edition.

The profitable opportunities which Shakespeare's works offer for exercises in textual criticism are no longer abundant. It is needful indeed to resist the temptation of making fresh conjectural emendations. Many a passage which has puzzled the uninitiated reader and has been denounced by him as a corruption of scrivener or compositor, loses its obscurity, even as it stands in the First Folio, or in the original quartos, in the seeing eye

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of the trained Shakespearean scholar. At any rate, none should now endeavour to repair the typographical errors of the first editions who is not specially equipped for the task. It is requisite to acquire beforehand a thorough knowledge of the orthography, the phraseology, the prosody, the technical vocabulary, the printer's and publisher's methods of work, which were in vogue in Shakespeare's era. The textual critic must be gifted with a natural appreciation of the rhythm of prose and verse. He must above all things have faith in the complex resources of Shakespeare's genius and some capacity to realise its varied working. The typographical defects of the original editions of Shakespeare should neither be extenuated nor exaggerated; but the unique place, which those rare volumes hold in the world's literature as the sole surviving sources of first-hand knowledge of Shakespeare's writings, gives their text indefeasible right only to be handled in the sternest spirit of reverent scholarship.

### V

It is among the happiest fortunes of the English-speaking peoples that Shakespeare should have written in their tongue, and should have become a link binding them together in a common affection for him. But Shakespeare's glory is no creation of mere patriotic or racial sentiment. Nor can it be justly regarded as an exclusively English possession.

Although an Englishman and an English writer of an epoch in English history which bears very definitely the

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impress of the national character, Shakespeare's transcendental power has long since overridden the limitations of nationality. No charge of provincial infatuation can now be brought against the English-speaking peoples who honour Shakespeare as the greatest of great men. No undue pride of race can be alleged against those who, descending from his fellow-countrymen, acclaim his supremacy in the universal empire of literature. Nations which bear no lineal relation with him are as generous in their laudation as those who are born to speak his language. His pre-eminence is recognised in every quarter of the globe to which civilised life has penetrated. All the world over, language is applied to his creations that ordinarily applies to beings of flesh and blood. Hamlet and Othello, Lear and Macbeth, Falstaff and Shylock, Brutus and Romeo, Ariel and Caliban are studied in almost every civilised tongue as if they were historic personalities, and the chief of the impressive phrases that fall from their lips are rooted in the speech of civilised humanity. Differences of national or racial temperament count for little or nothing in the recognition of Shakespeare. It was the Frenchman Dumas who gave voice to the eulogy that is not likely to be surpassed in pith or moment: "After God, Shakespeare has created most."

*Sidney Lee.*

PREFATORY PAGES OF THE FIRST FOLIO OF 1623<sup>1</sup>

TO THE READER<sup>2</sup>

[ON SHAKESPEARE'S PORTRAIT]

**T**HIS *Figure, that thou here seest put,*  
*It was for gentle Shakespeare cut :*  
*Wherein the Graver had a strife*  
*With Nature, to out-do the life :*  
*O, could he but have drawn his wit*  
*As well in brass, as he hath hit*  
*His face, the Print would then surpass*  
*All that was ever writ in brass.*  
*But, since he cannot, Reader, look,*  
*Not on his Picture, but his Book.*

*BI*<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The spelling of the contents of the prefatory pages has been modernised and the punctuation revised. Capital letters have been retained.

<sup>2</sup> Printed on the fly-leaf facing the titlepage of the First Folio, on which appeared the engraving of Shakespeare's portrait by Martin Droeshout.

<sup>3</sup> *BI*] Ben Jonson. See note on p. [xxxiii], *infra*.

## THE DEDICATION

TO *the most noble and Incomparable pair of brethren, William Earl of Pembroke, &c Lord Chamberlain to the King's most Excellent Majesty, and Philip Earl of Montgomery, &c Gentleman of his Majesty's bed-chamber, both knights of the most Noble Order of the Garter, and our singular good Lords.*<sup>1</sup>

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

Whilst we study to be thankful in our particular, for the many favours we have received from your Lordships, we are fallen upon the ill fortune, to mingle two the most diverse things that can be, fear and rashness ; rashness in the enterprise and fear of the success. For, when we value the places your Highnesses sustain, we cannot but know their dignity greater, than to descend to the reading of these trifles : and, while we name them trifles, we have deprived ourselves of the defence of our Dedication. But since your Lordships have been pleased to think these trifles something heretofore, and have prosecuted both them and their Author living with so much favour, we hope that (they outliving him, and he not having the fate, common with some, to be executor to his own writings) you will use the like indulgence toward them you have done unto their parent. There is a great difference, whether any Book choose

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<sup>1</sup> William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke (1580–1630), had been Knight of the Garter since 1603 and Lord Chamberlain since 1615. His younger brother Philip (1584–1650), who was created Earl of Montgomery in 1605, was made Knight of the Garter in 1608, and succeeded to the earldom of Pembroke on his elder brother's death in 1630. Both were generous patrons of poets and dramatists, and numerous volumes were, as in the present instance, dedicated to them jointly. Cf. Ducci's *Ars Aulica, or The Courtier's Arte*, 1607, Stephens' *A World of Wonders*, 1607, and Gerardo, *The Unfortunate Spaniard*, a translation by Leonard Digges of a Spanish novel, 1622.

## THE DEDICATION

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his Patrons or find them. This hath done both. For, so much were your Lordships' likings of the several parts, when they were acted, as before they were published, the Volume asked to be yours. We have but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his Orphans, Guardians, without ambition either of self-profit or fame: only to keep the memory of so worthy a Friend and Fellow alive, as was our Shakespeare, by humble offer of his plays to your most noble patronage. Wherein, as we have justly observed no man to come near your Lordships but with a kind of religious address, it hath been the height of our care, who are the Presenters, to make the present worthy of your Highnesses by the perfection. But there we must also crave our abilities to be considered, my Lords. We cannot go beyond our own powers. Country hands reach forth milk, cream, fruits, or what they have; and many Nations we have heard, that had not gums and incense, obtained their requests with a leavened Cake. It was no fault to approach their Gods by what means they could, and the most, though meanest, of things are made more precious when they are dedicated to Temples. In that name, therefore, we most humbly consecrate to your Highnesses these remains of your servant Shakespeare,<sup>1</sup> that what delight is in them may be ever your Lordships', the reputation his, and the faults ours, if any be committed by a pair so careful to shew their gratitude both to the living and to the dead, as is

Your Lordships' most bounden

JOHN HEMINGE.

HENRY CONDELL.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As member of the King's Company of Players, Shakespeare was officially designated one of the King's Servants, and took rank with the grooms of the bedchamber. The offices which the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery held at Court gave them authority over the King's actors.

<sup>2</sup> Both Heminge and Condell were leading members of Shakespeare's company of actors, and were intimate friends of the dramatist. To each he left by will 26s 8d wherewith to buy memorial rings.

## TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS

FROM the most able, to him that can but spell. There you are numbered. We had rather you were weighed. Especially, when the fate of all books depends upon your capacities: and not of your heads alone, but of your purses. Well! it is now public, and you will stand for your privileges, we know: to read and censure. Do so, but buy it first. That doth best commend a Book, the Stationer says. Then, how odd soever your brains be, or your wisdoms, make your license the same, and spare not. Judge your sixpen'orth, your shillingsworth, your five shillingsworth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the just rates, and welcome. But, whatever you do, buy. Censure will not drive a Trade, or make the Jack go. And though you be a Magistrate of wit, and sit on the Stage<sup>1</sup> at Blackfriars,<sup>2</sup> or the Cock-pit,<sup>3</sup> to arraign Plays daily, know these Plays have had their trial already and stood out all Appeals; and do now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of Court, than any purchased Letters of commendation.

It had been a thing, we confess, worthy to have been wished,

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<sup>1</sup> In Elizabethan and Jacobean theatres, men of fashion and critics were permitted to occupy seats on the stage.

<sup>2</sup> The Blackfriars' Theatre, on part of the present site of *The Times* office in London, was formed out of a private house in 1597, by Shakespeare's company of actors, but was leased to another company until 1609, and was not occupied by Shakespeare's company till after that date, when the dramatist was nearing retirement from active life.

<sup>3</sup> The Cockpit in Drury Lane was until 1615 devoted to cockfighting and other undignified shows. It was then converted into a theatre, and was a fashionable playhouse until its demolition during the civil war. The existing Drury Lane Theatre stands in its near neighbourhood.



## TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS

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that the Author himself had lived to have set forth, and overseen his own writings. But since it hath been ordained otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envy his Friends the office of their care and pain to have collected and published them, and so to have published them, as where (before) you were abused with diverse stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors, that exposed them: even those, are now offered to your view, cured and perfect of their limbs; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happy imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our province, who only gather his works, and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that read him. And there we hope to your divers capacities you will find enough, both to draw and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid, than it could be lost. Read him, therefore; and again, and again: and then if you do not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can be your guides: if you need them not, you can lead yourselves, and others. And such Readers we wish him.

JOHN HEMINGE.  
HENRY CONDELL.

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED, THE AUTHOR, MR. WILLIAM  
SHAKESPEARE AND WHAT HE HATH LEFT US.

**T**O draw no envy (*Shakespeare*) on thy name,  
Am I thus ample to thy Book, and Fame :  
While I confess thy writings to be such,  
As neither Man, nor Muse, can praise too much.  
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways  
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise :  
For silliest Ignorance on these may light,  
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right ;  
Or blind Affection which doth ne'er advance  
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance,  
Or crafty Malice, might pretend this praise,  
And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.  
There are, as some infamous Bawd, or whore,  
Should praise a Matron. What could hurt her more ?  
But thou art proof against them, and indeed  
Above th' ill fortune of them, or the need.  
I, therefore, will begin. Soul of the Age !  
The applause ! delight ! the wonder of our Stage !  
My Shakespeare, rise : I will not lodge thee by  
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Burial in what is now known as The Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey had been allotted to these three poets. Spenser and Beaumont were interred there in Shakespeare's lifetime, the former early in 1599, the latter only six weeks before Shakespeare's death, on 9 March, 1616. An elegiac sonnet on Shakespeare by William Basse, first printed in John Donne's poems in 1633, and

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*A little further, to make thee a room:  
Thou art a Monument, without a tomb,  
And art alive still, while thy book doth live,  
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.  
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses:  
I mean with great, but disproportioned Muses.  
For, if I thought my judgment were of years,  
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,  
And tell, how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,  
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line;<sup>1</sup>  
And though thou had'st small Latin, and less Greek,  
From thence to honour thee, I would not seek  
For names; but call forth thund'ring Aeschylus,  
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,  
Paccuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,<sup>2</sup>  
To life again, to hear thy Buskin tread,  
And shake a Stage: or, when thy Socks were on,  
Leave thee alone, for the comparison*

---

then appended to the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's Poems, begins thus:

“Renowned Spenser, lie a thought more nigh  
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie,” etc.

Basse's elegy seems to have been written shortly after Shakespeare's death on 23 April, 1616, and Ben Jonson apparently owed to it the suggestion for these lines.

- <sup>1</sup> John Lyly (1554?-1606), the author of *Euphues*, made much reputation as a writer of comedies. Thomas Kyd (1557?-1595?) and Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) gained their fame in tragedy. Only Marlowe was gifted with genuine tragic power.
- <sup>2</sup> Of the three writers of Latin tragedies here mentioned, fragments alone survive of the work of Marcus Pacuvius (220-130 B.C.) and of Lucius Accius (170-90 B.C.). The well-known dramatist, Lucius Annæus Seneca, a native of Cordova, (5 B.C.-65 A.D.), ten of whose tragedies are extant in a complete state, is intended by “him of Cordova.”

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*Of all, that insolent Greece or haughty Rome  
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.  
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show,  
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.  
He was not of an age, but for all time!  
And all the Muses still were in their prime,  
When like Apollo he came forth to warm  
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!  
Nature herself was proud of his designs,  
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!  
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,  
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other Wit.  
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,  
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please ;  
But antiquated and deserted lie  
As they were not of Nature's family.  
Yet must I not give Nature all : thy Art,  
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.  
For though the Poet's matter Nature be,  
His Art doth give the fashion. And, that he,  
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,  
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat  
Upon the Muses' anvil : turn the same,  
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame ;  
Or for the laurel, he may gain a scorn,  
For a good Poet's made, as well as born.  
And such wert thou. Look how the father's face  
Lives in his issue ; even so, the race  
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines  
In his well-turned and true-filed lines :  
In each of which he seems to shake a Lance,  
As brandished at the eyes of Ignorance.  
Sweet swan of Avon ! what a sight it were  
To see thee in our waters yet appear,*

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,  
That so did take Eliza and our James!  
But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere  
Advanced, and made a Constellation there!  
Shine forth, thou Star of poets, and with rage,  
Or influence, chide, or cheer the drooping Stage;  
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned like night,  
And despairs day, but for thy Volumes light.*

BEN: JONSON.<sup>1</sup>

UPON THE LINES AND LIFE OF THE FAMOUS SCENIC POET,  
MASTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

**T**HOSE hands, which you so clapped, go now and wring,  
You Britons brave, for done are Shakespeare's days:  
His days are done, that made the dainty Plays,  
Which made the Globe<sup>2</sup> of heaven and earth to ring.  
Dried is that vein, dried is the Thespian spring,  
Turned all to tears, and Phæbus clouds his rays:  
That corpse, that coffin now bestick those bays,  
Which crown'd him Poet first, then Poets' King.  
If Tragedies might any Prologue have,  
All those he made would scarce make one to this:

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Jonson (1573?-1637), the poet and dramatist, was, for the last eighteen years of Shakespeare's life, on terms of intimacy with him. In his *Discoveries* Jonson wrote of Shakespeare in a more critical vein, but included there the famous words, "I loved the man and do honour his memory on this side Idolatry as much as any. . . . There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned."

<sup>2</sup> The Globe Theatre on the Bankside, Southwark, was built in 1599 and was thenceforth identified with the production of Shakespeare's dramas.

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*Where Fame, now that he gone is to the grave  
(Death's public tiring-house) the Nuncius is.  
For though his line of life went soon about,  
The life yet of his lines shall never out.*

HUGH HOLLAND.<sup>1</sup>

### TO THE MEMORY OF M[r.]. W. SHAKESPEARE

*WE wondered (Shakespeare) that thou went'st so soon  
From the World's Stage, to the Grave's Tiring-room.  
We thought thee dead, but this thy printed worth  
Tells thy Spectators that thou went'st but forth  
To enter with applause. An Actor's Art  
Can die and live to act a second part.  
That's but an Exit of Mortality;  
This, a Re-entrance to a Plaudite.*

I. M.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh Holland (d. 1633), Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a member of the Mermaid Club, contributed verses to Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, 1605, and to many other books by well-known authors of the day.

<sup>2</sup> I. M.] i. e., James Mabbe (1572–1642?), Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, who was well known in his day as a translator from the Spanish.

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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TO THE MEMORY OF THE DECEASED AUTHOR  
MASTER W. SHAKESPEARE.

SHAKESPEARE, *at length thy pious fellows give  
The world thy Works: thy Works, by which outlive  
Thy Tomb thy name must; when that stone is rent,  
And Time dissolves thy Stratford Monument,<sup>1</sup>  
Here we alive shall view thee still. This Book,  
When Brass and Marble fade, shall make thee look  
Fresh to all Ages: when Posterity  
Shall loathe what's new, think all is prodigy  
That is not Shakespeare's: every Line, each Verse  
Here shall revive, redeem thee from thy Hearse.  
Nor Fire, nor cankering Age, as Naso said<sup>2</sup>  
Of his, thy wit-fraught Book shall once invade.  
Nor shall I ere believe, or think thee dead  
(Though missed) until our bankrupt Stage be sped  
(Impossible) with some new strain t' out-do  
Passions of Juliet or her Romeo;  
Or till I hear a Scene more nobly take,  
Than when thy half-Sword parleying Romans spake,  
Till these, till any of thy Volumes rest  
Shall with more fire, more feeling be expressed,  
Be sure, our Shakespeare, thou canst never die,  
But, crown'd with Laurel, live eternally.*

L. DIGGES.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is the earliest known reference to the monument to Shakespeare in the chancel of the church at Stratford-on-Avon.

<sup>2</sup> *Naso said*] Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XV, 871 *seqq.* Shakespeare adapts the same lines in his *Sonnets* (LV, 1-7).

<sup>3</sup> Leonard Digges (1588-1635), M. A., of University College, Oxford, contributed a second elegy on Shakespeare in somewhat similar vein to the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*.

## THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS

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THE NAMES OF THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN ALL THESE PLAYS:<sup>1</sup>

†William Shakespeare	Samuel Gilburn
†Richard Burbage	†Robert Armin
John Heminge	†William Ostler
Augustine Phillips	Nathaniel Field
†William Kemp	John Underwood
†Thomas Pope	Nicholas Tooley
†George Bryan	William Ecclestone
Henry Condell	Joseph Taylor
†William Sly	Robert Benfield
†Richard Cowley	Robert Gough
John Lowin	Richard Robinson
Samuel Cross	John Shank
†Alexander Cook	John Rice

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<sup>1</sup> These men were fellow-members with Shakespeare of the King's Company of Players. Those marked † died before the publication of the First Folio in 1623. The last survivor of these fellow-actors of Shakespeare was John Lowin. He seems to have died at the patriarchal age of ninety-three in 1669.



ADDITIONAL COMMENDATORY VERSES  
FROM THE SECOND FOLIO OF 1632

UPON THE EFFIGIES OF MY WORTHY FRIEND, THE AUTHOR  
MASTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, AND HIS WORKS

SPECTATOR, *this Life's Shadow is to see*  
*The truer image and a livelier he*  
*Turn Reader. But, observe his Comic vein,*  
*Laugh, and proceed next to a Tragic strain,*  
*Then weep; so when thou find'st two contraries,*  
*Two different passions from thy rapt soul rise,*  
*Say, (who alone affect such wonders could)*  
*Rare Shakespeare to the life thou dost behold.*<sup>1</sup>

AN EPITAPH ON THE ADMIRABLE DRAMATIC POET,  
W. SHAKESPEARE<sup>2</sup>

WHAT *need my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones,*  
*The labour of an Age, in pilèd stones*  
*Or that his hallow'd Reliques should be hid*  
*Under a star-ypointing Pyramid?*  
*Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,*  
*What needst thou such dull witness of thy name?*  
*Thou in our wonder and astonishment*  
*Hast built thyself a last'ing Monument:*

<sup>1</sup> These lines bear no signature, and there is no clue to their authorship.

<sup>2</sup> These lines are by John Milton, and were re-printed in the 1645 edition of his poems with the heading "On Shakespeare. 1630."

## ADDITIONAL COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*For whilst to the shame of slow-endavouring Art  
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each part  
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued Book,  
Those Delphic Lines with deep Impression took ;  
Then thou our fancy of her self bereaving,  
Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving,  
And so Sepulchred in such pomp dost lie  
That Kings for such a Tomb would wish to die.*

### ON WORTHY MASTER SHAKESPEARE AND HIS POEMS

*A MIND reflecting ages past, whose clear  
And equal surface can make things appear  
Distant a Thousand years, and represent  
Them in their lively colours' just extent :  
To outrun hasty time, retrieve the fates,  
Roll back the heavens, blow ope the iron gates  
Of death and Lethe, where confused lie  
Great heaps of ruinous mortality :  
In that deep dusky dungeon to discern  
A royal Ghost from Churls ; by art to learn  
The physiognomy of shades, and give  
Them sudden birth, wond'ring how oft they live ;  
What story coldly tells, what Poets feign  
At second hand, and picture without brain,  
Senseless and soulless shows : to give a Stage  
( Ample and true with life ) voice, action, age,  
As Plato's year and new Scene of the world  
Them unto us, or us to them had hurl'd :  
To raise our ancient Sovereigns from their hearse,  
Make Kings his subjects ; by exchanging verse,  
Enlive their pale trunks ; that the present age  
Joys in their joy, and trembles at their rage :*

## ADDITIONAL COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*Yet so to temper passion, that our ears  
Take pleasure in their pain, and eyes in tears  
Both weep and smile ; fearful at plots so sad,  
Then, laughing at our fear ; abus'd and glad  
To be abus'd, affected with that truth  
Which we perceive is false ; pleas'd in that ruth  
At which we start ; and by elaborate play  
Tortur'd and tickled ; by a crablike way  
Time past made pastime, and in ugly sort  
Disgorging up his ravine for our sport :  
— While the Plebeian Imp, from lofty throne,  
Creates and rules a world, and works upon  
Mankind by secret engines ; now to move  
A chilling pity, then a vigorous love ;  
To strike up and stroke down, both joy and ire,  
To steer th' affections ; and by heavenly fire  
Mould us anew. Stol'n from ourselves —*

*This, and much more, which cannot be express'd,  
But by himself, his tongue and his own breast,  
Was Shakespeare's freehold ; which his cunning brain  
Improv'd by favour of the ninefold train.  
The buskin'd Muse, the Comic Queen, the grand  
And louder tone of Clio, nimble hand,  
And nimbler foot of the melodious pair,  
The Silver-voiced Lady ; the most fair  
Calliope, whose speaking silence daunts.  
And she whose praise the heavenly body chants.*

*These jointly woo'd him, envying one another  
(Obey'd by all as Spouse, but lov'd as brother)  
And wrought a curious robe of sable grave,  
Fresh green, and pleasant yellow, red most brave,  
And constant blue, rich purple, guiltless white,  
The lowly Russet, and the Scarlet bright ;  
Branch'd and embroider'd like the painted Spring*

## ADDITIONAL COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*Each leaf match'd with a flower, and each string  
Of golden wire, each line of silk; there run  
Italian works whose thread the Sisters spun;  
And there did sing, or seem to sing, the choice  
Birds of a foreign note and various voice.  
Here hangs a mossy rock; there plays a fair  
But chiding fountain purl'd: not the air,  
Nor clouds nor thunder, but were living drawn,  
Not out of common Tiffany or Lawn,  
But fine materials, which the Muses know  
And only know the countries where they grow.  
Now, when they could no longer him enjoy  
In mortal garments pent, — death may destroy,  
They say, his body, but his verse shall live  
And more than nature takes, our hands shall give;  
In a less volume, but more strongly bound  
Shakespeare shall breathe and speak, with Laurel crown'd  
Which never fades: fed with Ambrosian meat  
In a well-lined vesture rich and neat.  
So with this robe they clothe him, bid him wear it;  
For time shall never stain, nor envy tear it.*

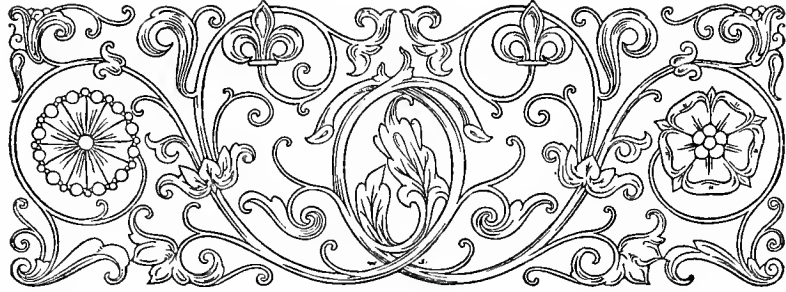
The friendly admirer of his Endowments. I. M. S.<sup>1</sup>

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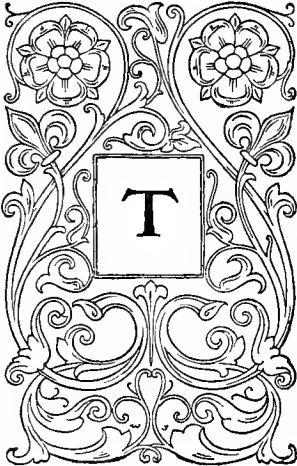
<sup>1</sup> I. M. S.] These initials have not been satisfactorily explained. Coleridge, who quoted the poem in his "Lectures on Shakespeare," 1811-12 (No. IX), and declared it to have "no equal for justness and distinctness of description in reference to the powers and qualities of lofty genius," confidently assigned it to John Milton, Student. Another claimant is Jasper Mayne, Student, a well-known poet and dramatist (1604-1672). "In Memoriam Scriptoris," "John Milton, Senior," "John Marston, Student," "John Marston, Satyrst" seem to be less probable interpretations.

# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS





## INTRODUCTION

HE history of "The Comedy of Errors" is not encumbered with many of those theories which have heaped about the tomb of Shakespeare so vast a cairn of conjecture. The commentators find little in its text to provoke their ingenuity, and no battle royal has raged about the questions of its date or its authorship. It is quietly allowed, by the most sceptical, to be an unadulterated work of the master, and no one has seriously attempted to overturn the slender, but sensible and sufficient, arguments on which its position among Shakespeare's writings is based. No early quarto of it is known; it appears for the first time immediately after "Measure for Measure" in the folio of 1623. Meres mentions it among his six excellent comedies of Shakespeare in 1598, in the course of his "Palladis Tamia." But we know that it was played in 1594, and it is evidently

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still older. There is a patent reference in the third act to that civil war in France which went on from the summer of 1589 to that of 1593. Another and vaguer allusion to "whole armadoes of carracks" is supposed to confine us to the period 1589-91. The consensus of internal evidence, in end-tests and the like, puts "The Comedy of Errors" second in the series of Shakespeare's undoubted plays, between "Love's Labour's Lost," which may belong to 1589, and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," which may belong to 1591. We are not likely to be confuted if we claim 1590 for its year of composition.

The critical interest of "The Comedy of Errors" centres in the fact that it is the only surviving play of Shakespeare in which we observe that he deliberately or closely follows a previous work from the hand of an acknowledged master of drama. In other productions we find him competing with such contemporaries as Greene and Kyd, and easily excelling them. Elsewhere we may persuade ourselves to see the influence of Seneca upon him, or even that of Ariosto. But these traces of apprenticeship to foreign models are slight, and above all they are fragmentary and episodic. For instance, — and we can wish for none more appropriate, — we see in the strictly parallel farce of "The Taming of the Shrew" evidence of Latin and Italian influence, yet this play is in its essentials — that is to say, in all its unchallenged Petruchio and Katherine scenes — in conception as well as execution a characteristic and independent work of Shakespeare. This "The Comedy of Errors" is not; here for once and never again Shake-



## INTRODUCTION

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speare bent his genius to that of a predecessor only less adventurous than himself. It was one thing to compete with the vague "precursors" of 1580; it was another thing to interpret, as an engraver interprets a painting, a masterpiece by the greatest comic playwright of Latin antiquity.

Hence the very first thing to be done in examining "The Comedy of Errors" critically is to discover what relation it bears to the "Menæchmi" of Plautus, of which it is a studied paraphrase or recast. No English translation of Plautus had been published when Shakespeare's play was composed, and commentators have shown great ingenuity in trying to prove that the poet must have had access to an English version of the "Menæchmi," made in verse by William Warner, but not printed until 1594. It is to exaggerate the littleness of Shakespeare's "little Latin" to suppose that he required such help. At that time Plautus was abundantly studied in England, and nothing could have been easier than to obtain a sufficiently full impression of a text which was at no point to be implicitly followed. No doubt the omniscience of Shakespeare has been exaggerated, but it is needless to carry reaction so far as to regard him as a dunce and an ignoramus. The existence of adaptations of the "farce of mistaken identity" in several languages has led some critics to see in these the sources of Shakespeare's play, and, in particular, a rough-and-tumble drollery called "Jack Juggler," of 1563, has been named. But a glance at these trifles will prove to us that Shakespeare, if he knew of them, discarded them

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altogether, and started anew from the plot of the "Menæchmi."

There was much in the temperament of Plautus which could not fail to be attractive to the youthful Shakespeare, who would instinctively recognise in that joyous buccaneer of the Latin stage qualities closely akin to certain of his own. The sort of boisterous animal spirits, held in check only by such discipline as the cultivation of romantic beauty may supply, would be exemplified for us in dramatic literature of the first class only by the works of Plautus, if Shakespeare had not written "The Comedy of Errors," "The Taming of the Shrew," and "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Nearly seventeen centuries passed over Europe without producing a playwright capable of attempting to rival, in its own redundant and efflorescent kind, the marvellous comedy of "The Captives." In a brilliant passage, too, Mr. Mackail has shown that if we wish to discover a parallel to the maritime romance of the "Rudens" we must look for it no earlier than in "A Winter's Tale." It is the more needful to remind ourselves of these elements of likeness between Shakespeare and Plautus, because it is precisely in the "Menæchmi" that the likeness may evade us, since the latter comes down to us as one of the least sentimental and least romantic of all the pure farces of Plautus. Perhaps the note which criticism should strike in approaching "The Comedy of Errors" is that this is the "Menæchmi" rewritten as Plautus himself might have composed it had he approached the subject in one of his more lyrical and more fertile moods.

## INTRODUCTION

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The comedy of the “Menæchmi” has been called dry and bare. It is, as we have admitted, less clothed upon in the raiment of romantic poetry than even some of its own coevals. But it cannot be depreciated without danger of injustice, and still more shall we be liable to that charge if we attempt to minimise Shakespeare’s debt to it. The central notion of the twin-brothers, who have not met or heard of one another since early childhood, each suddenly infringing on the social province of the other, and starting a myriad burlesque confusions,—this may or may not be original in the Latin dramatist. But we know of no earlier version of it, and we may be content to suppose it, as Shakespeare of course never doubted it to be, the invention of Plautus.

It is one of the most innocently diverting and most successfully farcical of all the germ-plots invented or adapted by Plautus; and we may see that Shakespeare—who knew other plays by the same dramatist, since there are clear evidences of his acquaintance with the “Amphitryon” and “The Captives”—was drawn to it at once by its inherent excellence and perhaps by the comparatively meagre use which Plautus had made of its opportunities for farcical movement.

Shakespeare began by falling into what was, I suppose, a small direct error. The scene of the “Menæchmi” was Epidamnus (or “Epidamnum,” as Shakespeare calls it). This place was situated on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, in what is now Albania; the modern name of it is Durazzo, and it lies exactly south of Dulcigno. Not only was this town in relation with Syracuse, and not

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at all with Ephesus, but Shakespeare's own story brings in Epidamnum and Epidaurus, too; some critics have suggested that he chose Ephesus because it was a centre of witchcraft. I confess I cannot pretend to follow the geography of "The Comedy of Errors," although that of the "Menæchmi" is intelligible enough. In manipulating the story, however, Shakespeare's next change was altogether an improvement upon Plautus. Ægeon, whose name in the Latin play is Moschus, had died of grief long before the "Menæchmi" begins, and it is the grandfather who survives and who is the prime mover of the search; he remains, however, in Syracuse, and all the beautiful first scene of "The Comedy of Errors," with the humane Duke of Ephesus, and the sad, romantic figure of the sea-worn Ægeon, is wholly Shakespeare's in conception as well as in execution. This scene, too, contains one of his splendid shipwrecks, not less fine, in its quieter way, than the celebrated description in "Pericles." And Æmilia, too, the Abbess, who in such a charming, childish fashion turns out at the end of the play to have been Ægeon's wife, and mother to the restless and unobservant Antipholus at her doors, — she also is one of Shakespeare's sketches, and responds to nothing at all in the "Menæchmi."

It is particularly worthy of notice, in this connection, that "The Comedy of Errors," if we compare it closely with the rest of its author's very early plays, is remarkable for its solid and consistent architecture. It seems, in a word, to have a better structure than they have. This is directly owing to Plautus, and it is very interesting

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to see how, at this early stage in his career, the man who was to become the greatest maker of plays in the world, admitted the superior judgment of his great Latin predecessor. When he was conceiving "The Comedy of Errors," say in 1589, Shakespeare had not attained, in this technical matter of the building up of a good stage-play, the vivid and sprightly art of Plautus. I do not know anything more interesting in its way than the evidence which "The Comedy of Errors" offers us of the fact that Shakespeare was aware of his own immaturity. In this play, and in this alone, we see him face to face with a writer of his own class, who is still his superior as an artist, and we find him loyally acknowledging that, in the conduct of a lively plot, Plautus still knows the business better than he does.

In the central intrigues of the play, we discover that Shakespeare does not diverge at all from his Latin original. As the "Menæchmi," so "The Comedy of Errors" rests on the humorous situation of a twin-brother unexpectedly turning up in the domestic life of a man who has never given him a thought, yet who is practically so identical with the intruder that those most intimate with the one cannot distinguish him from the other. In all this essential part of the story, the conception of the two Antipholi is precisely the same as that of Menæchmus of Epidamnus and Menæchmus Sosicles. And the unities of time and place which Shakespeare on other occasions ("The Tempest" being the great exception) has treated with so much indifference, are here carefully transferred from the Latin. There is even the same

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confusion, or heedlessness, about the age of the brothers. The commentators of "The Comedy of Errors" have been much occupied in reconciling the "thirty-three years" of which the Abbess speaks at the end of the fifth act with Ægeon's vague arithmetic in the first act. But Plautus is just as uncertain, and unless we read him very closely, we may be led to believe that the twin-brothers were only in their twelfth year when Sosicles came to Epidamnus.

Throughout, the nature of Shakespeare's change is not in the direction of complete modification of the plot, but in that of adornment, addition, enrichment. The most striking instance of this is the creation of the second Dromio, as twin-slave, who repeats, in an exquisitely entertaining way, the embarrassing identity of his master. In Plautus, the slave of the invading Menæchmus is named Messenio, and he has no counterpart in Epidamnus. The place there of the other Dromio is filled partly by Cylindrus the cook, partly by Peniculus the parasite. By omitting these characters, Shakespeare lost a little in variety, but he gained extremely in richness of humour. He doubled his effects, and, in doing so, we notice his skill in intensifying instead of distracting our keen and delighted observation of the Master Twins. For the odd adventures of either Dromio are so conceived that they never disturb the imbroglio, but always add to it, and this little change of purview increases at every turn the fun of the intrigue.

To support his Dromios, — who have now to be relieved of some of the comic business, — Shakespeare has invented Balthazar, Angelo, and the Merchants. But it

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is observable that in the figure of Pinch, the school-master, he adopts, with very slight alteration, a truly Plautan creation, the unseemly being who is an unnamed Doctor in the "Menæchmi." These changes are quite unimportant, but that is not the case with the beautiful and touching figure of Luciana, the sister-in-law of Antipholus of Ephesus. This was a conception which could never have occurred to the boisterous Latin playwright, and no more exquisite example of Shakespeare's delicate humanity, of the "gospel-light" in which he lived and worked, could be given than this introduction of a pure, generous, and romantic girl into the background of his romping farce. He forgets all about Plautus on the few occasions on which he allows this pretty creature to entertain us, and in the earliest and almost the only scene in which a long speech is given to Luciana, she comes on to the boards with Antipholus of Syracuse in a smiling temper to which nothing short of two complete sonnets can give expression. And in these pieces of flowing, rounded verse, we have, perhaps for the first time, that note of gentle amenity, of persuasive feminine sweetness, which Shakespeare was to create in English poetry:—

"Alas! poor women! make us but believe,  
Being compact of credit, that you love us;  
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve;  
We in your motion turn, — and you may move us!" —

so Luciana murmurs, like a brooklet or a wood-lark, and we forget for a moment that she is dancing hand in hand with Punch and Judy.

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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We are discovered, however, in the act of *lèse-majesté* towards the matronly figure of Adriana. But Adriana it is, surely, impossible to take very seriously. Oddly enough, it is precisely in this character that critics of the past have enforced themselves to see, not merely the special art of Shakespeare, but numerous traits of his personal habits and even of his autobiography. "Oh! that second-best bed at Stratford," the commentators have cried, even as they have actually been reminded of his own twin-babies by the brothers of Syracuse and Ephesus! But the fact is that it was no precocious observation of the shrewishness of wives, any more than any domestic note of the similarity of twins, that produced these features of "The Comedy of Errors." As completely as Luciana belongs to Shakespeare, so does Adriana belong to Plautus. We have only to turn to the "Menæchmi" to see that the wife of the brother in Epidamnus (the invading brother is in each play still unmarried) is precisely such a shrew as Adriana is. Her *petulantia linguæ*, her hasty freakish temper, her qualities of a scold and a termagant, are not indicated by Shakespeare more clearly than by Plautus, although more carefully, with less of the flying touch of a mere brilliant sketch. But the wife of Menæchmus fidgets and fusses exactly as Adriana does; her husband does not scruple to call her a "lioness," and she has a father — whom Shakespeare ignored — who acknowledges and deprecates the violence of her temper.

At the close of the "Menæchmi," the indignant wife flies into the house in terror of the violence of Menæchmus



## INTRODUCTION

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Sosicles, and we see no more of her. Plautus was not sufficiently interested in her to let us hear how she was affected by the clearing up of the mystery of the two brothers. But Shakespeare is infinitely more subtle than this. He is too closely touched by the misfortunes of Adriana to pack her off, mystified and punished, in her rebellion of spirit. The feigned madness of the husband occurs in each play, but it is Shakespeare only who imagines the cry from Adriana's heart :—

“ Hold ! hurt him not, for God's sake ! he is mad,”

and who makes her in her remorse accuse herself of offences against her husband, which are so much too emphatic that the gentle Luciana is obliged at once to protest. It is more than doubtful, indeed, whether either Menæchmus in the farce of Plautus would be held by the audience to deserve such consideration. The part of the Courtesan (she is called Erotium in the Latin play) has been preserved and rather closely transferred by Shakespeare to “The Comedy of Errors.” But Antipholus is rather a wayward visitor than anything worse, whereas Menæchmus of Epidamnus is the bearer to Erotium of presents which he has impudently stolen from his wife's wardrobe. The other brother is not less of a rogue, for he is content to rob Erotium of her mantle and her bracelet ; and slight as is the change which Shakespeare has introduced, in the business of the goldsmith and the chain, we feel it to produce in every particular an improvement in grace and moral decorum. So, too, it will be noticed that on each occasion Plautus's slaves are

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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much more impudent and disloyal than Shakespeare could ever allow his to be, even at their most petulant moments.

In the beginning of the third act of "The Comedy of Errors," Shakespeare enriches his material by borrowing from another comedy of Plautus, the "Amphitruo." In that play Jupiter takes the shape of the Theban general while he is away from Thebes, fighting for his country, and the god is accompanied by Mercury in the guise of Sosia, Amphitryon's slave. The general returns, and is driven away by the intruders, the imbroglia being almost exactly the same as that accepted by the English poet. Shakespeare, however, with his customary tact, redeems the situation from its Latin coarseness, and keeps this incident also in the light, high key of the rest of his farcical comedy. It might be worth while, before we lay down "The Comedy of Errors," to see how the "Amphitruo" episode was treated later on by Molière, and, more independently than is commonly realised, by Dryden. The curious reader should, at the same time, glance at "Les Jumeaux," in which Rotrou made his adaptation of the "Menæchmi" plot.

On the whole we see that what is particularly observant in the general character of "The Comedy of Errors" is the light it throws on the advancing technical skill of Shakespeare. Up to this time the genius of the youthful dramatist had shown itself more in splendid passages and single lines than in the building up of a whole play. The more closely we examine these earliest years, it must be confessed, the more vague do the lines of biography

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become, the more do the outlines flicker in the dim air of our ignorance. However, we do see faintly, as precedent to our "Comedy of Errors," a chain of chronicle-plays on the reign of Henry VI. with such unmistakably Shakespearian things in them as the death of Mortimer and the farce of Jack Cade; more dimly still we see a "Titus Andronicus," perhaps by Kyd, which Shakespeare may have touched; while really the only very certain testimony to his skill as a craftsman is "Love's Labour's Lost," to which all critics combine in assigning priority among Shakespeare's productions for the stage.

The plot of "Love's Labour's Lost" is of the slightest and the feeblest, and it is moreover believed to be Shakespeare's invention. It is plausible to suppose that the thinness of it was patent to him as he revised it, and that he persuaded himself that he had been too ambitious in taking upon his sole fancy so arduous a task. In the chronicle-play and in the Roman horror, he merely embroiders upon some rough texture woven by Kyd or Greene or a humbler playwright quite unknown. None of these, nor yet his own still callow invention, satisfies Shakespeare, whom we now find in "The Comedy of Errors" going humbly and attentively to school. This is a work of mental discipline; here he is sitting at the feet of Plautus, no rough amateur with a brilliant notion of stage-business, like Kyd, but a finished and exquisitely accomplished master of the theatre. One of the slightest pieces of this Latin playwright, one which is so slight that it is almost a sketch, Shakespeare takes and adapts with a careful sense of his own deficiencies and of the

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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requirements of the new and ardent English public. He looks to Plautus to learn how to please, but already he is tall enough to peer over the Latin poet's shoulder and to see theatrical possibilities of which Plautus never dreamed.

Our task, therefore, is to weigh these possibilities, to examine these embroideries. We find that they are all of them, without exception, additions in the direction of what is humane and graceful and fanciful. The note of Plautus, with all his boisterous high spirits, is hard and dry; his humour is that of a daring and brilliant school-boy. Shakespeare introduces the adult mood; even his farce is tender and indulgent. Where Plautus sees nothing but the obvious horse-play, the nuances of humanity reveal themselves to Shakespeare. The characters in the "Menæchmi" are marionettes, moved about the stage, indeed, with marvellous adroitness and turning somersaults with dazzling agility, but in their essence mechanical, with an energy that is vicious, puerile, and practically non-existent. Shakespeare comes and clothes these dolls with romantic life, adding here a touch and there a movement which just suffices to remove them out of the realm of the puppet-show. He is not yet a perfect master of his own genius, and in consequence the transformation is not complete. The little figures seem to palpitate for a few minutes, and then they stiffen again into marionettes. But at all events, the breath of life has passed over the stage; the first puffs of it brighten the eyes and fill the hair of Luciana and Ægeon.

It would take us too far to enter very closely into the

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relations which ingenuity may discover between "The Comedy of Errors" and other plays of Shakespeare. There is entanglement in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and mistaken identity in "Twelfth Night." The attitude of Adriana to her husband, Antipholus of Ephesus, is repeated with much greater fulness in "The Taming of the Shrew." In all these instances the Elizabethan poet takes from Plautus what he finds left there in a state entirely mundane and superficial, and he adds to it his own spiritual colouring. In "Hamlet" he was to say, speaking of the Players, that

"Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light for them ;"

Shakespeare had always present with him this conviction of the "lightness" of the Latin playwright, whose "Miles Gloriosus" had led directly to the earliest English comedy, "Ralph Roister Doister," and who had inspired "Gammer Gurton's Needle" with his boisterous humour. Shakespeare does not reject or disdain this boyish gaiety, but he adds solidity to it; he takes the naked Latin farce and dresses it in rich brocades.

The romantic humanity of Shakespeare is finely illustrated by every one of the additions and modifications which make "The Comedy of Errors" what it is. Even the points which are merely indicated add to this impression. For instance, the "Menæchmi" leaves us in doubt, when the curtain falls, as to the future welfare of the characters; we feel that they may easily slip back into unseemly wrangle and nefarious intrigue. Their imbroglío has been excessively diverting, but it has led to

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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no distinct moral issue. But when "The Comedy of Errors" closes, it has diverted us still more than the "Menæchmi" did, and we feel in addition that its confusions have led directly towards peace and repose. There is nothing left uncomfortable and furtive, there is no temptation to return to the wrangling mood. We are convinced that Adriana's shrewishness has been shamed out of her for life; that Luciana will make a perfect consort for Antipholus of Syracuse; that Ægeon and the Abbess — now recognised as the matron Æmilia — will gather their patriarchal family around them in Ephesus, and that all will be tranquillity.

Finally, we must not allow ourselves to fall into the error of overpraising "The Comedy of Errors." It is not a work of the highest order; it is marked by executive faults, tameness in the versification, timidity in the exposition of character, crudity and thinness in the language. It is not one of Shakespeare's great complex masterpieces, glowing and luminous from beginning to end. But it is a charmingly sportive and garrulous farce of his unfinished youth, and it has the extreme importance of being that work in which, more than anywhere else, we can watch the technical development of his style and the evidences of his growing skill and selective self-criticism.

EDMUND GOSSE.

# **THE COMEDY OF ERRORS**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

SOLINUS, duke of Ephesus.

ÆGEON, a merchant of Syracuse.

ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, } twin brothers, and sons to  
ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, } Ægeon and Æmilia.

DROMIO of Ephesus, } twin brothers, and attendants on  
DROMIO of Syracuse, } the two Antipholuses.

BALTHAZAR, a merchant.

ANGELO, a goldsmith.

First Merchant, friend to Antipholus of Syracuse.

Second Merchant, to whom Angelo is a debtor.

PINCH, a schoolmaster.

ÆMILIA, wife to Ægeon, an abbess at Ephesus.

ADRIANA, wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.

LUCIANA, her sister.

LUCE, servant to Adriana.

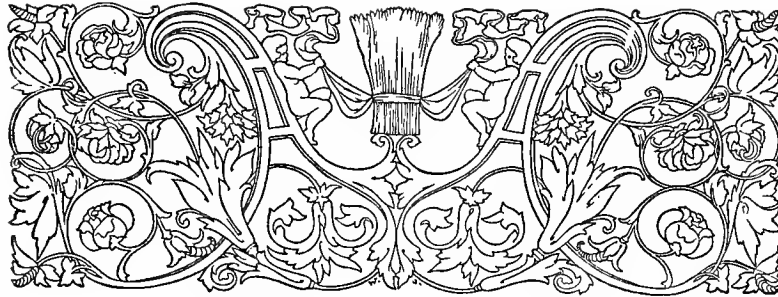
A Courtezan.

Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants.

SCENE — *Ephesus.*

<sup>1</sup> This play was first printed in the First Folio. The *Dramatis Personæ* was first supplied in Nicholas Rowe's edition of 1709.





ACT FIRST — SCENE I

A HALL IN THE DUKE'S PALACE

Enter DUKE, ÆGEON, Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants

ÆGEON



PROCEED, SOLINUS, TO  
procure my fall,  
And by the doom of death end  
woes and all.

DUKE. Merchant of Syra-  
cusa, plead no more ;  
I am not partial to infringe our  
laws :  
The enmity and discord which  
of late  
Sprung from the rancorous out-  
rage of your duke  
To merchants, our well-dealing  
countrymen,

Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,  
Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,

<sup>4</sup> *partial*] inclined.

<sup>8</sup> *guilders*] money. Cf. IV, i, 4, *infra*. The word reproduces the Dutch



SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,  
 I'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave.  
 In Syracuse was I born ; and wed  
 Unto a woman, happy but for me,  
 And by me, had not our hap been bad.  
 With her I lived in joy ; our wealth increased 40  
 By prosperous voyages I often made  
 To Epidamnum ; till my factor's death,  
 And the great care of goods at random left,  
 Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse :  
 From whommy absence was not six months old,  
 Before herself, almost at fainting under  
 The pleasing punishment that women bear,  
 Had made provision for her following me,  
 And soon and safe arrived where I was.  
 There had she not been long but she became 50  
 A joyful mother of two goodly sons ;  
 And, which was strange, the one so like the other  
 As could not be distinguish'd but by names.  
 That very hour, and in the self-same inn,  
 A meaner woman was delivered  
 Of such a burthen, male twins, both alike :  
 Those, for their parents were exceeding poor,  
 I bought, and brought up to attend my sons.  
 My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys,

35 *nature*] natural affection.

42 *Epidamnum*] The Folio reading is *Epidamium*. *Epidamnum*, which is Pope's correction, has been generally adopted. It is the form found in W. W's translation of Plautus' *Menæchmi*, 1595. The correct name of the town is "Epidamnos."



SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Dispersed those vapours that offended us ; 90  
And, by the benefit of his wished light,  
The seas wax'd calm, and we discovered  
Two ships from far making amain to us,  
Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this :  
But ere they came, — O, let me say no more !  
Gather the sequel by that went before.

DUKE. Nay, forward, old man ; do not break off so ;  
For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

ÆGE. O, had the gods done so, I had not now 100  
Worthily term'd them merciless to us !  
For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,  
We were encounter'd by a mighty rock ;  
Which being violently borne upon,  
Our helpful ship was splitted in the midst ;  
So that, in this unjust divorce of us,  
Fortune had left to both of us alike  
What to delight in, what to sorrow for.  
Her part, poor soul ! seeming as burdened  
With lesser weight, but not with lesser woe, 110  
Was carried with more speed before the wind ;  
And in our sight they three were taken up  
By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.  
At length, another ship had seized on us ;  
And, knowing whom it was their hap to save,  
Gave healthful welcome to their shipwreck'd guests ;  
And would have reft the fishers of their prey,  
Had not their bark been very slow of sail ;  
And therefore homeward did they bend their course.  
Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss ;

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT I

That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd, 120  
To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

DUKE. And, for the sake of them thou sorrowest for,  
Do me the favour to dilate at full  
What hath befall'n of them and thee till now.

ÆGE. My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,  
At eighteen years became inquisitive  
After his brother : and importuned me  
That his attendant — so his case was like,  
Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name —  
Might bear him company in the quest of him : 130  
Whom whilst I labour'd of a love to see,  
I hazarded the loss of whom I loved.  
Five summers have I spent in farthest Greece,  
Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,  
And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus ;  
Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought  
Or that, or any place that harbours men.  
But here must end the story of my life ;  
And happy were I in my timely death,  
Could all my travels warrant me they live. 140

DUKE. Hapless Ægeon, whom the fates have mark'd  
To bear the extremity of dire mishap !  
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,

---

125 *My youngest boy, etc.*] This does not quite harmonise with other passages of Ægeon's story ; at lines 79 and 110 he describes himself as separated from his "latter-born" son, who is carried away from him along with his wife. The discrepancy is due to Shakespeare's hasty composition.

131 *labour'd of a love*] was troubled by a desire.

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,  
Which princes, would they, may not disannul,  
My soul should sue as advocate for thee.  
But, though thou art adjudged to the death,  
And passed sentence may not be recall'd  
But to our honour's great disparagement,  
Yet will I favour thee in what I can. 150  
Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day  
To seek thy help by beneficial help :  
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus ;  
Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,  
And live ; if no, then thou art doom'd to die.  
Gaoler, take him to thy custody.

GAOL. I will, my lord.

ÆGE. Hopeless and helpless doth Ægeon wend,  
But to procrastinate his lifeless end. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II — THE MART

*Enter* ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, DROMIO of Syracuse,  
and First Merchant

FIRST MER. Therefore give out you are of Epi-  
dammum,  
Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.  
This very day a Syracusian merchant  
Is apprehended for arrival here ;  
And, not being able to buy out his life,  
According to the statute of the town,

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS    ACT I

---

Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.

There is your money that I had to keep.

ANT. S. Go bear it to the Centaur, where we host,

And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.

10

Within this hour it will be dinner-time :

Till that, I 'll view the manners of the town,

Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,

And then return, and sleep within mine inn ;

For with long travel I am stiff and weary.

Get thee away.

DRO. S. Many a man would take you at your word,

And go indeed, having so good a mean.

[*Exit.*

ANT. S. A trusty villain, sir ; that very oft,

When I am dull with care and melancholy,

20

Lightens my humour with his merry jests.

What, will you walk with me about the town,

And then go to my inn, and dine with me ?

FIRST MER. I am invited, sir, to certain merchants,

Of whom I hope to make much benefit ;

I crave your pardon.    Soon at five o'clock,

Please you, I 'll meet with you upon the mart,

And afterward consort you till bed-time :

My present business calls me from you now.

ANT. S. Farewell till then : I will go lose myself,

30

And wander up and down to view the city.

FIRST MER. Sir, I commend you to your own content.

[*Exit.*

---

28 *consort you*] accompany you. Cf. *L. L. L.*, II, i, 177 : " Sweet health and fair desires *consort* your Grace " ; *Rom. & Jul.*, III, i, 135, and *Jul. Caes.*, V, i, 83.



SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ANT. S. He that commends me to mine own content

Commends me to the thing I cannot get.  
I to the world am like a drop of water,  
That in the ocean seeks another drop ;  
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,  
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself :  
So I, to find a mother and a brother,  
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.

40

*Enter* DROMIO of Ephesus

Here comes the almanac of my true date.  
What now ? how chance thou art return'd so soon ?

DRO. E. Return'd so soon ! rather approach'd too late :

The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit ;  
The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell ;  
My mistress made it one upon my cheek :  
She is so hot, because the meat is cold ;  
The meat is cold, because you come not home ;  
You come not home, because you have no stomach ;  
You have no stomach, having broke your fast ;  
But we, that know what 't is to fast and pray,  
Are penitent for your default to-day.

50

---

38 *confounds*] destroys, loses.

41 *almanac . . . date*] The speaker was born at the same hour as the newcomer, who is therefore called the indicator of the other's true date of birth.

52 *Are penitent*] Suffer penance (by fasting and praying).

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT I

---

ANT. S. Stop in your wind, sir : tell me this, I pray :  
Where have you left the money that I gave you ?

DRO. E. O,— sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday last  
To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper ?  
The saddler had it, sir ; I kept it not.

ANT. S. I am not in a sportive humour now :  
Tell me, and dally not, where is the money ?  
We being strangers here, how darest thou trust 60  
So great a charge from thine own custody ?

DRO. E. I pray you, jest, sir, as you sit at dinner :  
I from my mistress come to you in post ;  
If I return, I shall be post indeed,  
For she will score your fault upon my pate.  
Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your clock,  
And strike you home without a messenger.

ANT. S. Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of  
season ;  
Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.  
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee ? 70

DRO. E. To me, sir ? why, you gave no gold to me.

ANT. S. Come on, sir knave, have done your foolish-  
ness,

And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

DRO. E. My charge was but to fetch you from the  
mart

---

63-65 *post* . . . *score*] A post usually stood in the middle of a shop or  
a tavern, and on it the scores of customers were chalked up. The  
words in line 63, *in post*, which suggest the quibble, mean "in haste."  
66 *clock*] Pope's emendation of the original reading *cook*.

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner:  
My mistress and her sister stays for you.

ANT. S. Now, as I am a Christian, answer me,  
In what safe place you have bestow'd my money ;  
Or I shall break that merry sounce of yours,  
That stands on tricks when I am undisposed : 80  
Where is the thousand marks thou had'st of me ?

DRO. E. I have some marks of yours upon my pate,  
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders ;  
But not a thousand marks between you both.  
If I should pay your worship those again,  
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

ANT. S. Thy mistress' marks ? what mistress, slave,  
hast thou ?

DRO. E. Your worship's wife, my mistress at the  
Phoenix ;  
She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,  
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner. 90

ANT. S. What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,  
Being forbid ? There, take you that, sir knave.

DRO. E. What mean you, sir ? for God's sake, hold  
your hands !

Nay, an you will not, sir, I'll take my heels. [Exit.]

ANT. S. Upon my life, by some device or other  
The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.  
They say this town is full of cozenage ;  
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,

---

80 *stands on tricks*] indulges in tricks.

96 *o'er-raught*] over-reached, cheated out of, cheated.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT I

---

Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,  
Soul-killing witches that deform the body, 100  
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,  
And many such-like liberties of sin :  
If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.  
I'll to the Centaur, to go seek this slave  
I greatly fear my money is not safe. [Exit.

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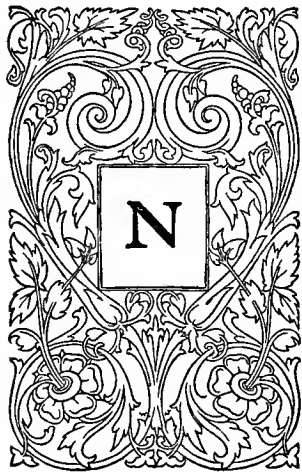
<sup>102</sup> *liberties of sin*] Hanmer reads *libertines*. Steevens explains "licensed offenders." Malone gives the more probable interpretation, "licentious actions."



ACT SECOND — SCENE I

THE HOUSE OF ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS

ADRIANA *Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*



EITHER MY HUSBAND  
nor the slave return'd,  
That in such haste I sent to  
seek his master !

Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

LUC. Perhaps some merchant  
hath invited him,

And from the mart he's some-  
where gone to dinner.

Good sister, let us dine, and  
never fret :

A man is master of his liberty :  
Time is their master ; and when  
they see time,

They'll go or come : if so, be patient, sister.

ADR. Why should their liberty than ours be more ? 10

LUC. Because their business still lies out o' door.

ADR. Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.

LUC. O, know he is the bridle of your will.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT II

---

ADR. There 's none but asses will be bridled so.

LUC. Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.  
There 's nothing situate under heaven's eye  
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky :  
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,  
Are their males' subjects and at their controls :  
Men more divine, the masters of all these, 20  
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,  
Indued with intellectual sense and souls,  
Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls,  
Are masters to their females, and their lords :  
Then let your will attend on their accords.

ADR. This servitude makes you to keep unwed.

LUC. Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.

ADR. But, were you wedded, you would bear some  
sway.

LUC. Ere I learn love, I 'll practise to obey.

ADR. How if your husband start some other where ? 30

LUC. Till he come home again, I would forbear.

ADR. Patience unmoved ! no marvel though she  
pause ;

They can be meek that have no other cause.  
A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,  
We bid be quiet when we hear it cry ;  
But were we burden'd with like weight of pain,  
As much, or more, we should ourselves complain :  
So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee,  
With urging helpless patience wouldst relieve me ;

---

34-37] The identical sentiment is repeated in *Much Ado*, V, i, 20-31.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

But, if thou live to see like right bereft, 40  
This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.

LUC. Well, I will marry one day, but to try.  
Here comes your man ; now is your husband nigh.

*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus*

ADR. Say, is your tardy master now at hand ?

DRO. E. Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that  
my two ears can witness.

ADR. Say, didst thou speak with him ? know'st thou  
his mind ?

DRO. E. Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear :  
Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

LUC. Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not feel 50  
his meaning ?

DRO. E. Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well  
feel his blows ; and withal so doubtfully, that I could  
scarce understand them.

ADR. But say, I prithee, is he coming home ?  
It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

DRO. E. Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.

ADR. Horn-mad, thou villain !

DRO. E. I mean not cuckold-mad ;  
But, sure, he is stark mad.

---

41 *fool-begg'd*] admittedly or notoriously foolish. There is an allusion to the custom of begging or petitioning for the guardianship of any one who was admitted to be a fool. Here patience is personified as the "fool" whose guardianship is begged.

54 *understand*] stand under: a poor quibble. Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, v, 28.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS    ACT II

---

When I desired him to come home to dinner, 60  
 He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold :  
 " 'T is dinner-time," quoth I ; " My gold ! " quoth he :  
 " Your meat doth burn," quoth I ; " My gold ! " quoth he :  
 " Will you come home ? " quoth I ; " My gold ! " quoth he,  
 " Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain ? "  
 " The pig," quoth I, " is burn'd ; " " My gold ! " quoth he :  
 " My mistress, sir," quoth I ; " Hang up thy mistress !  
 I know not thy mistress ; out on thy mistress ! "

LUC. Quoth who ?

DRO. E. Quoth my master : 70

" I know," quoth he, " no house, no wife, no mistress."  
 So that my errand, due unto my tongue,  
 I thank him, I bare home upon my shoulders ;  
 For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

ADR. Go back again, thou slave, and fetch him home.

DRO. E. Go back again, and be new beaten home ?

For God's sake, send some other messenger.

ADR. Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across.

DRO. E. And he will bless that cross with other  
 beating :

Between you I shall have a holy head. 80

ADR. Hence, prating peasant ! fetch thy master home.

DRO. E. Am I so round with you as you with me,  
 That like a football you do spurn me thus ?

---

80 *holy head*] The quibble on *cross* suggests the punning use of *holy* in the sense of "full of holes."

82 *round*] blunt, outspoken. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, i, 191. The word quibblingly suggests *football* and *leather* in 83 and 85.



SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither :  
 If I last in this service, you must case me in leather.

[*Exit.*

LUC. Fie, how impatience loureth in your face !

ADR. His company must do his minions grace,  
 Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.  
 Hath homely age the alluring beauty took  
 From my poor cheek ? then he hath wasted it : 90  
 Are my discourses dull ? barren my wit ?  
 If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,  
 Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard :  
 Do their gay vestments his affections bait ?  
 That's not my fault ; he's master of my state :  
 What ruins are in me that can be found,  
 By him not ruin'd ? then is he the ground  
 Of my defeatures. My decayed fair  
 A sunny look of his would soon repair :  
 But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale, 100  
 And feeds from home ; poor I am but his stale.

LUC. Self-harming jealousy ! fie, beat it hence !

ADR. Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.  
 I know his eye doth homage elsewhere ;

---

88 *starve for a merry look*] Cf. *Sonnets*, xlvi, 3, "famish'd for a look,"  
 and lxxv, 10, "starved for a look."

98 *defeatures*] disfigurements. Shakespeare is the only Elizabethan  
 writer who uses the word in this sense, and that only here, in V,  
 i, 299, *infra*, and in *Venus and Adonis*, 736.

*fair*] beauty. This substantival use of the adjective is common  
 in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Cf. *Sonnets*, xvi, 11 ; xviii, 7 and 10 ;  
 lxviii, 3 ; and lxxxiii, 2.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT II

Or else what lets it but he would be here ?  
Sister, you know he promised me a chain ;  
Would that alone, alone he would detain,  
So he would keep fair quarter with his bed !  
I see the jewel best enamelled  
Will lose his beauty ; yet the gold bides still, 110  
That others touch, and often touching will  
Wear gold : and no man that hath a name,  
By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.  
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,  
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.  
LUC. How many fond fools serve mad jealousy !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter* ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse

ANT. S. The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up  
Safe at the Centaur ; and the heedful slave  
Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out  
By computation and mine host's report.

107 *alone, alone*] Thus the Second Folio, which substitutes the second *alone* for the two words *a lone* of the First Folio. Though some emendation of the original text is essential, it is doubtful if the Second Folio reading be correct. Hanmer read *alone, alas*.

110-112 *yet the gold . . . gold*] Thus in the First Folio, save for Theobald's correction of *Wear* for *Where* (l. 112). The meaning seems to be that gold which is touched or tested lasts long, and at the same time much touching or handling wears gold down.

113 *By falsehood*] Theobald's reading, *But falsehood*, makes better sense.

SCENE II      THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

I could not speak with Dromio since at first  
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

How now, sir ! is your merry humour alter'd ?  
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.  
You know no Centaur ? you received no gold ?  
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner ?      10  
My house was at the Phoenix ? Wast thou mad,  
That thus so madly thou didst answer me ?

DRO. S. What answer, sir ? when spake I, such a  
word ?

ANT. S. Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

DRO. S. I did not see you since you sent me hence,  
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.

ANT. S. Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,  
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner ;  
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeas'd.

DRO. S. I am glad to see you in this merry vein :      20  
What means this jest ? I pray you, master, tell me.

ANT. S. Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the  
teeth ?

Think'st thou I jest ? Hold, take thou that, and that.

*[Beating him.]*

DRO. S. Hold, sir, for God's sake ! now your jest is  
earnest :

Upon what bargain do you give it me ?

ANT. S. Because that I familiarly sometimes  
Do use you for my fool, and chat with you,

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT II

---

Your sauciness will jest upon my love,  
And make a common of my serious hours.  
When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport, 30  
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.  
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,  
And fashion your demeanour to my looks,  
Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

DRO. S. Sconce call you it? so you would leave bat-  
tering, I had rather have it a head: an you use these  
blows long, I must get a sconce for my head, and in-  
sconce it too; or else I shall seek my wit in my shoulders.  
But, I pray, sir, why am I beaten?

ANT. S. Dost thou not know? 40

DRO. S. Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

ANT. S. Shall I tell you why?

DRO. S. Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every  
why hath a wherefore.

ANT. S. Why, first, — for flouting me; and then,  
wherefore, —

For urging it the second time to me.

DRO. S. Was there ever any man thus beaten out of  
season,

When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme  
nor reason?

Well, sir, I thank you.

ANT. S. Thank me, sir! for what? 50

---

29 *make a common of*] make ground open to all, intrude upon.

35-38 *sconce . . . insconce*] *Sconce* is used at first for "head" and  
then for "head covering," or "helmet." Cf. I, ii, 79, *supra*.

38 *seek . . . shoulders*] find my wit in my back, *i. e.* run away.

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. S. Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

ANT. S. I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

DRO. S. No, sir: I think the meat wants that I have.

ANT. S. In good time, sir; what's that?

DRO. S. Basting.

ANT. S. Well, sir, then 't will be dry.

DRO. S. If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.

ANT. S. Your reason? 60

DRO. S. Lest it make you choleric, and purchase me another dry basting.

ANT. S. Well, sir, learn to jest in good time: there's a time for all things.

DRO. S. I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.

ANT. S. By what rule, sir?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of father Time himself.

ANT. S. Let's hear it. 70

DRO. S. There's no time for a man to recover his hair that grows bald by nature.

ANT. S. May he not do it by fine and recovery?

---

61 *choleric*] Cf. *T. of Shrew*, IV, i, 173-175, for a like reference to the choleric effects of overcooked meat.

62 *dry basting*] beating that does not draw blood. See *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 263.

73 *fine and recovery*] This phrase is employed again in *M. Wives*, IV, ii, 225, and *Hamlet*, V, i, 115. It is somewhat loosely employed. "Fine" and "recovery" were names of legal processes which rendered ownership absolute and incontestable.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT II

---

DRO. S. Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig, and recover the lost hair of another man.

ANT. S. Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement ?

DRO. S. Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts : and what he hath scanted men in hair, he hath given them in wit. 80

ANT. S. Why, but there 's many a man hath more hair than wit.

DRO. S. Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.

ANT. S. Why, thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers without wit.

DRO. S. The plainer dealer, the sooner lost : yet he loseth it in a kind of jollity.

ANT. S. For what reason ?

DRO. S. For two ; and sound ones too. 90

ANT. S. Nay, not sound, I pray you.

DRO. S. Sure ones, then.

ANT. S. Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.

DRO. S. Certain ones, then.

ANT. S. Name them.

DRO. S. The one, to save the money that he spends in tiring ; the other, that at dinner they should not drop in his porridge.

---

81-82 *more hair than wit*] For further reference to this proverb cf. *Two Gent.*, III, i, 361.

84 *lose his hair*] A symptom of venereal disease. Cf. line 88.

97 *tiring*] dressing. Pope's emendation of the old reading *trying*.

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ANT. S. You would all this time have proved there  
is no time for all things. 100

DRO. S. Marry, and did, sir ; namely, no time to re-  
cover hair lost by nature.

ANT. S. But your reason was not substantial, why  
there is no time to recover.

DRO. S. Thus I mend it : Time himself is bald, and  
therefore to the world's end will have bald followers

ANT. S. I knew 't would be a bald conclusion :  
But, soft ! who wafts us yonder ?

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*

ADR. Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown :  
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects ; 110  
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.

The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow  
That never words were music to thine ear,  
That never object pleasing in thine eye,  
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,  
That never meat sweet-savour'd in thy taste,  
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved to thee.  
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,  
That thou art then estranged from thyself ?  
Thyself I call it, being strange to me, 120  
That, undividable, incorporate,  
Am better than thy dear self's better part.  
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me !

---

122 *better part*] The soul, as in *Sonnets*, xxxix, 2, lxxiv, 8 : " My spirit  
is thine, the better part of me."

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT II

---

For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall  
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,  
And take unmingled thence that drop again,  
Without addition or diminishing,  
As take from me thyself, and not me too.  
How dearly would it touch thee to the quick,  
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious, 130  
And that this body, consecrate to thee,  
By ruffian lust should be contaminate !  
Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me,  
And hurl the name of husband in my face,  
And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot-brow,  
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring,  
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow ?  
I know thou canst ; and therefore see thou do it.  
I am possess'd with an adulterate blot ;  
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust : 140  
For if we two be one, and thou play false,  
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,  
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.  
Keep, then, fair league and truce with thy true bed ;  
I live distain'd, thou undishonoured.

ANT. S. Plead you to me, fair dame ? I know you  
not :

In Ephesus I am but two hours old,  
As strange unto your town as to your talk ;

---

145 *distain'd*] The sense requires that this word should have the unusual meaning of "unstained." It ordinarily means "deeply stained," "defiled."



SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,  
Wants wit in all one word to understand. 150

LUC. Fie, brother! how the world is changed with  
you!

When were you wont to use my sister thus?  
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

ANT. S. By Dromio?

DRO. S. By me?

ADR. By thee; and this thou didst return from him,  
That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,  
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

ANT. S. Did you converse, sir, with this gentle-  
woman?

What is the course and drift of your compact? 160

DRO. S. I, sir? I never saw her till this time.

ANT. S. Villain, thou liest; for even her very words  
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

DRO. S. I never spake with her in all my life.

ANT. S. How can she thus then call us by our  
names?

Unless it be by inspiration.

ADR. How ill agrees it with your gravity  
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,  
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!  
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt, 170  
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.  
Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine:  
Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine,  
Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,  
Makes me with thy strength to communicate:

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT II

---

If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,  
Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss ;  
Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion  
Infect thy sap, and live on thy confusion.

ANT. S. To me she speaks ; she moves me for her  
theme: 180

What, was I married to her in my dream ?  
Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this ?  
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss ?  
Until I know this sure uncertainty,  
I 'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

LUC. Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

DRO. S. O, for my beads ! I cross me for a sinner.  
This is the fairy land : O spite of spites !  
We talk with goblins, owls, and sprites :  
If we obey them not, this will ensue, 190  
They 'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

LUC. Why pratest thou to thyself, and answer'st  
not ?

Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot !

DRO. S. I am transformed, master, am not I ?

ANT. S. I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

DRO. S. Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

ANT. S. Thou hast thine own form.

DRO. S. No, I am an ape.

LUC. If thou art changed to aught, 't is to an ass.

DRO. S. 'T is true ; she rides me, and I long for grass.

---

189 *sprites*] Pope completed the line by inserting *elvish* before *sprites* ;  
the change has been generally adopted.

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

'T is so, I am an ass ; else it could never be 200  
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

ADR. Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,  
To put the finger in the eye and weep,  
Whilst man and master laughs my woes to scorn.  
Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.  
Husband, I 'll dine above with you to-day,  
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.  
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,  
Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.

Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well. 210

ANT. S. Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell ?  
Sleeping or waking ? mad or well-advised ?  
Known unto these, and to myself disguised !  
I 'll say as they say, and persevere so,  
And in this midst at all adventures go.

DRO. S. Master, shall I be porter at the gate ?

ADR. Ay ; and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

LUC. Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.

*[Exeunt.]*



ACT THIRD—SCENE I  
BEFORE THE HOUSE OF ANTIPHOLUS OF  
EPHESUS

*Enter* ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, DROMIO of Ephesus, ANGELO,  
and BALTHAZAR

ANTIPHOLUS E.



GOOD SIGNIOR ANGELO,  
you must excuse us all ;  
My wife is shrewish when I  
keep not hours :  
Say that I linger'd with you at  
your shop  
To see the making of her car-  
canet,  
And that to-morrow you will  
bring it home.  
But here's a villain that would  
face me down  
He met me on the mart, and  
that I beat him,  
And charged him with a thousand marks in gold,  
And that I did deny my wife and house.  
Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by this ? 10

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. E. Say what you will, sir, but I know what I  
know ;  
That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand to  
show :  
If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave  
were ink,  
Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.

ANT. E. I think thou art an ass.

DRO. E. Marry, so it doth appear  
By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear.  
I should kick, being kick'd ; and, being at that pass,  
You would keep from my heels, and beware of an ass.

ANT. E. You 're sad, Signior Balthazar : pray God  
our cheer  
May answer my good will and your good welcome here. 20

BAL. I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your wel-  
come dear.

ANT. E. O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh or fish,  
A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty dish.

BAL. Good meat, sir, is common : that every churl  
affords.

ANT. E. And welcome more common ; for that's  
nothing but words.

BAL. Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry  
feast.

ANT. E. Ay, to a niggardly host and more sparing  
guest :  
But though my cates be mean, take them in good part ;  
Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart.  
But, soft ! my door is lock'd. — Go bid them let us in. 30

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

---

DRO. E. Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely, Gillian, Ginn!

DRO. S. [*Within*] Mome, malt-horse, capon, coxcomb,  
idiot, patch!

Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the hatch.  
Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st for such  
store,

When one is one too many? Go get thee from the door.

DRO. E. What patch is made our porter? My master  
stays in the street.

DRO. S. [*Within*] Let him walk from whence he came,  
lest he catch cold on 's feet.

ANT. E. Who talks within there? ho, open the door!

DRO. S. [*Within*] Right, sir; I'll tell you when, an  
you'll tell me wherefore.

ANT. E. Wherefore? for my dinner: I have not  
dined to-day.

DRO. S. [*Within*] Nor to-day here you must not;  
come again when you may.

ANT. E. What art thou that keepest me out from  
the house I owe?

DRO. S. [*Within*] The porter for this time, sir, and  
my name is Dromio.

DRO. E. O villain, thou hast stolen both mine office  
and my name!

The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.

If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,

Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name, or thy  
name for an ass.

LUCE. [*Within*] What a coil is there, Dromio? who  
are those at the gate!

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. E. Let my master in, Luce.

LUCE. [Within] 'Faith, no; he comes too late;  
And so tell your master.

DRO. E. O Lord, I must laugh! 50  
Have at you with a proverb;— Shall I set in my staff?

LUCE. [Within] Have at you with another; that's, —  
When? can you tell?

DRO. S. [Within] If thy name be call'd Luce, — Luce,  
thou hast answer'd him well.

ANT. E. Do you hear, you minion? you 'll let us in,  
I hope?

LUCE. [Within] I thought to have ask'd you.

DRO. S. [Within] And you said no.

DRO. E. So, come, help: well struck! there was blow  
for blow.

ANT. E. Thou baggage, let me in.

LUCE. [Within] Can you tell for whose sake?

DRO. E. Master, knock the door hard.

LUCE. [Within] Let him knock till it ache.

ANT. E. You 'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the  
door down.

LUCE. [Within] What needs all that, and a pair of  
stocks in the town? 60

ADR. [Within] Who is that at the door that keeps all  
this noise?

---

51 *Shall I set in my staff?*] "To set in one's staff" is a proverbial expression meaning "to make one's self at home."

52 *When? can you tell?*] Another proverbial expression or catchword, used by way of parrying an awkward question. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, i, 43: "Ay, *when? canst tell?*"

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

---

DRO. S. [*Within*] By my troth, your town is troubled  
with unruly boys.

ANT. E. Are you there, wife? you might have come  
before.

ADR. [*Within*] Your wife, sir knave! go get you from  
the door.

DRO. E. If you went in pain, master, this "knave"  
would go sore.

ANG. Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome: we  
would fain have either.

BAL. In debating which was best, we shall part with  
neither.

DRO. E. They stand at the door, master; bid them  
welcome hither.

ANT. E. There is something in the wind, that we  
cannot get in.

DRO. E. You would say so, master, if your garments  
were thin.

Your cake here is warm within; you stand here in the  
cold:

It would make a man mad as a buck, to be so bought  
and sold.

ANT. E. Go fetch me something: I'll break ope the  
gate.

---

65 *If you went in pain, etc.*] A poor, quibbling echo of the application of  
the insulting word "knave" to the speaker's master: "You are  
a knave, so, if you felt pain, you would be a sore knave."

67 *part with*] From French "partir," "to go away;" "go away with,"  
"obtain."

72 *bought and sold*] taken in, deceived. Cf. *Rich. III*, V, iii, 304: "For  
Dickon thy master is *bought and sold*."



SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. S. [*Within*] Break any breaking here, and I'll  
break your knave's pate.

DRO. E. A man may break a word with you, sir; and  
words are but wind;

Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind.

DRO. S. [*Within*] It seems thou want'st breaking:  
out upon thee, hind!

DRO. E. Here's too much "out upon thee!" I pray  
thee, let me in.

DRO. S. [*Within*] Ay, when fowls have no feathers,  
and fish have no fin.

ANT. E. Well, I'll break in: go borrow me a crow. 80

DRO. E. A crow without feather? Master, mean  
you so?

For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather:  
If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.

ANT. E. Go get thee gone; fetch me an iron crow.

BAL. Have patience, sir: O, let it not be so!

Herein you war against your reputation,  
And draw within the compass of suspect  
The unviolated honour of your wife.

Once this, — your long experience of her wisdom,  
Her sober virtue, years, and modesty, 90

Plead on her part some cause to you unknown;

And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse

Why at this time the doors are made against you.

Be ruled by me: depart in patience,

---

89 *Once this*] Once for all, in fine, to sum up. This usage is not un-  
common, though rare. Malone proposed to read *Own this*.

93 *made against*] "barred against," a common provincial usage.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

---

And let us to the Tiger all to dinner ;  
And about evening come yourself alone  
To know the reason of this strange restraint.  
If by strong hand you offer to break in  
Now in the stirring passage of the day,  
A vulgar comment will be made of it, 100  
And that supposed by the common rout  
Against your yet ungalled estimation,  
That may with foul intrusion enter in,  
And dwell upon your grave when you are dead ;  
For slander lives upon succession,  
For ever housed where it gets possession.

ANT. E. You have prevail'd : I will depart in quiet,  
And, in despite of mirth, mean to be merry.  
I know a wench of excellent discourse,  
Pretty and witty ; wild, and yet, too, gentle : 110  
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,  
My wife — but, I protest, without desert —  
Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal :  
To her will we to dinner. [*To Ang.*] Get you home,  
And fetch the chain ; by this I know 't is made :  
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porpentine ;  
For there 's the house : that chain will I bestow —

---

99-105 *Now . . . succession*] Now in the busy time of the day, when people are most about, adverse comments will be made by the crowd, and censure proceeding from the common people's suppositions, when it is aimed at your hitherto unblemished reputation, may get a firm footing, with all its foulness, and may adhere to your name when you are dead ; for slander is never without heirs to keep up the estate.

108 *in despite of mirth*] in the absence of any just cause for mirth.

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Be it for nothing but to spite my wife —  
Upon mine hostess there : good sir, make haste.  
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me, 120  
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.  
ANG. I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.  
ANT. E. Do so. This jest shall cost me some expense.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — THE SAME

*Enter* LUCIANA, *with* ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse

LUC. And may it be that you have quite forgot  
A husband's office ? shall, Antipholus,  
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot ?  
Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous ?  
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,  
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness :  
Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth ;  
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness :  
Let not my sister read it in your eye ;  
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator ; 10  
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty ;  
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger ;  
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted ;  
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint ;

---

3 *love-springs*] young shoots of love. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 656 : " This canker that eats up *Love's* tender spring."

4 *Shall love, etc.*] Cf. *Sonnet* cxix, 11 : " And *ruin'd* love, when it is built anew." Theobald substituted *ruinous* for *ruinate*, the obvious error of the Folio.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

---

Be secret-false : what need she be acquainted ?  
What simple thief brags of his own attain ?  
'T is double wrong, to truant with your bed,  
And let her read it in thy looks at board :  
Shame hath a bastard fame, well managed ;  
Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word. 20  
Alas, poor women ! make us but believe,  
Being compact of credit, that you love us ;  
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve ;  
We in your motion turn, and you may move us.  
Then, gentle brother, get you in again ;  
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife :  
'T is holy sport, to be a little vain,  
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.  
ANT. S. Sweet mistress, — what your name is else,  
I know not,  
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine, — 30  
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not  
Than our earth's wonder ; more than earth divine  
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak ;  
Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit,  
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,  
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.  
Against my soul's pure truth why labour you  
To make it wander in an unknown field ?  
Are you a god ? would you create me new ?  
Transform me, then, and to your power I'll yield. 40

---

22 *compact of credit*] compounded, made up entirely, of credulity. Cf.  
*Venus and Adonis*, 149 : "Love is a spirit all *compact of fire*."

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

But if that I am I, then well I know  
Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,  
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe :  
Far more, far more to you do I decline.  
O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,  
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears :  
Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote :  
Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,  
And as a bed I'll take them, and there lie ; 50  
And, in that glorious supposition, think  
He gains by death that hath such means to die :  
Let Love, being light, be drowned if she sink !  
LUC. What, are you mad, that you do reason so ?  
ANT. S. Not mad, but mated ; how, I do not know.  
LUC. It is a fault that springeth from your eye.  
ANT. S. For gazing on your beams, fair sun, being by.  
LUC. Gaze where you should, and that will clear  
your sight.  
ANT. S. As good to wink, sweet love, as look on  
night.  
LUC. Why call you me love ? call my sister so.  
ANT. S. Thy sister's sister.  
LUC. That 's my sister.  
ANT. S. No ; 60  
It is thyself, mine own self's better part,

---

54 *Not mad, but mated*] The quibble on "mated" in the double sense of "bewildered" and "having a mate or partner," is common. Cf. V, i, 282, *infra*, and *T. of Shrew*, III, ii, 248, where "mated" and "mad" similarly figure together.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,  
My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,  
My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.

LUC. All this my sister is, or else should be.

ANT. S. Call thyself sister, sweet, for I am thee.  
Thee will I love, and with thee lead my life :  
Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife.  
Give me thy hand.

LUC. O, soft, sir ! hold you still :  
I'll fetch my sister, to get her good will. [Exit. 70

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

ANT. S. Why, how now, Dromio ! where runn'st  
thou so fast ?

DRO. S. Do you know me, sir ? am I Dromio ? am  
I your man ? am I myself ?

ANT. S. Thou art Dromio, thou art my man, thou  
art thyself.

DRO. S. I am an ass, I am a woman's man, and be-  
sides myself.

ANT. S. What woman's man ? and how besides  
thyself ?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due to a <sup>80</sup>  
woman ; one that claims me, one that haunts me, one  
that will have me.

---

64 *heaven's claim*] all that I claim of heaven.

66 *I am thee*] I identify myself with thee. Capell read, "I aim [*i. e.*  
mean] thee," duplicating "my sweet hope's aim" (l. 63) ; but the  
change does not seem necessary.

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ANT. S. What claim lays she to thee ?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, such claim as you would lay to your horse ; and she would have me as a beast : not that, I being a beast, she would have me ; but that she, being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

ANT. S. What is she ?

DRO. S. A very reverent body ; ay, such a one as a man may not speak of, without he say Sir-reverence. I <sup>90</sup> have but lean luck in the match, and yet is she a wondrous fat marriage.

ANT. S. How dost thou mean a fat marriage ?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, she 's the kitchen-wench, and all grease ; and I know not what use to put her to, but to make a lamp of her, and run from her by her own light. I warrant, her rags, and the tallow in them, will burn a Poland winter : if she lives till doomsday, she 'll burn a week longer than the whole world.

ANT. S. What complexion is she of ? 100

DRO. S. Swart, like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept : for why she sweats ; a man may go over shoes in the grime of it.

ANT. S. That 's a fault that water will mend.

DRO. S. No, sir, 't is in grain ; Noah's flood could not do it.

ANT. S. What 's her name ?

---

90 *Sir-reverence*] a vulgar corruption of "save" or "saving your reverence ;" a derivative from the Latin, *salvâ reverentiâ*, i. e. "asking your pardon." Cf. *Much Ado*, III, iv, 32 : "I think you would have me say, *saving your reverence*, a husband."

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

---

DRO. S. Nell, sir ; but her name and three quarters, that's an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from hip to hip. 110

ANT. S. Then she bears some breadth ?

DRO. S. No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip : she is spherical, like a globe ; I could find out countries in her.

ANT. S. In what part of her body stands Ireland ?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, in her buttocks : I found it out by the bogs.

ANT. S. Where Scotland ?

DRO. S. I found it by the barrenness ; hard in the palm of the hand. 120

ANT. S. Where France ?

DRO. S. In her forehead ; armed and reverted, making war against her heir.

ANT. S. Where England ?

DRO. S. I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them ; but I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

ANT. S. Where Spain ?

DRO. S. 'Faith, I saw it not ; but I felt it hot in her breath. 130

ANT. S. Where America, the Indies ?

---

123 *heir*] The Second Folio reads *haire*. The quibble refers to the civil war progressing in France at the date of the production of the play, when Henry of Navarre, whom Englishmen regarded as the rightful heir to the French throne, was fighting for the succession.



SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. S. Oh, sir, upon her nose, all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain ; who sent whole armadoes of caracks to be ballast at her nose.

ANT. S. Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands ?

DRO. S. Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude, this drudge, or diviner, laid claim to me ; called me Dromio ; swore I was assured to her ; told me what privy marks I had about me, as, the mark of my shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my left arm, that I, amazed, ran from her as a witch :  
And, I think, if my breast had not been made of faith,  
and my heart of steel,  
She had transform'd me to a curtal dog, and made me  
turn i' the wheel.

ANT. S. Go hie thee presently, post to the road :  
An if the wind blow any way from shore,  
I will not harbour in this town to-night :  
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,  
Where I will walk till thou return to me.  
If every one knows us, and we know none,  
'T is time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone.

DRO. S. As from a bear a man would run for life,  
So fly I from her that would be my wife. [Exit.

ANT. S. There 's none but witches do inhabit here ;

---

135 *ballast*] ballasted, loaded. For this participial form cf. *Hamlet*, III, iv, 207 : "Hoist [*i. e.* "hoisted"] with his own petar."

144 *curtal . . . wheel*] dog with a docked tail that worked the turnspit in the kitchen.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

---

And therefore 't is high time that I were hence.  
She that doth call me husband, even my soul  
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,  
Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,  
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,  
Hath almost made me traitor to myself: 160  
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,  
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

*Enter ANGELO with the chain*

ANG. Master Antipholus, —

ANT. S. Ay, that's my name.

ANG. I know it well, sir: lo, here is the chain.

I thought to have ta'en you at the Porpentine:  
The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

ANT. S. What is your will that I shall do with this?

ANG. What please yourself, sir: I have made it for  
you.

ANT. S. Made it for me, sir! I bespoke it not.

ANG. Not once, nor twice, but twenty times you  
have. 170

Go home with it, and please your wife withal;  
And soon at supper-time I'll visit you,  
And then receive my money for the chain.

ANT. S. I pray you, sir, receive the money now,  
For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

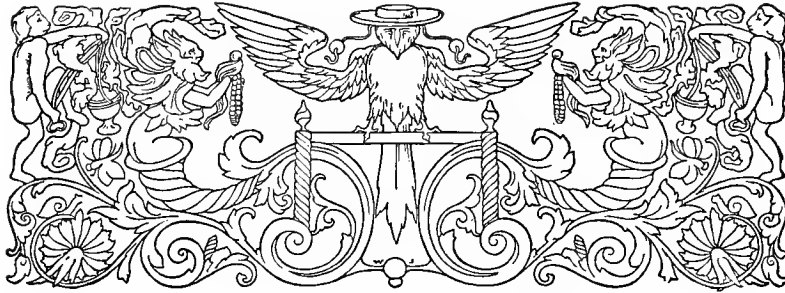
ANG. You are a merry man, sir: fare you well. [*Exit.*]

ANT. S. What I should think of this, I cannot tell:  
But this I think, there's no man is so vain

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.  
I see a man here needs not live by shifts, 180  
When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.  
I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay :  
If any ship put out, then straight away. [*Exit.*]

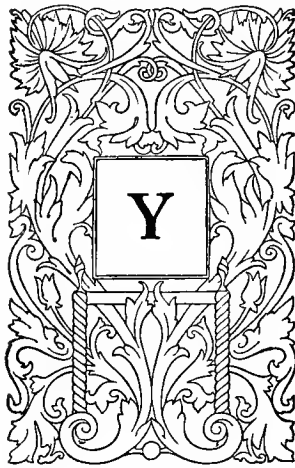


## ACT FOURTH—SCENE I

### A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter Second Merchant, ANGELO, and an Officer*

SECOND MERCHANT



YOU KNOW SINCE PENTE-  
cost the sum is due,  
And since I have not much im-  
portuned you ;  
Nor now I had not, but that I  
am bound  
To Persia, and want guilders for  
my voyage :  
Therefore make present satisfac-  
tion,  
Or I'll attach you by this officer.  
ANG. Even just the sum that  
I do owe to you

Is growing to me by Antipholus ;  
And in the instant that I met with you  
He had of me a chain : at five o'clock  
I shall receive the money for the same.

10

4 *guilders*] See note on I, i, 8, *supra*.

8 *growing*] accruing. Cf. IV, iv, 129 *et seq.*, *infra*.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Pleaseth you walk with me down to his house,  
I will discharge my bond, and thank you too.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of Ephesus  
from the courtesan's*

OFF. That labour may you save : see where he comes.

ANT. E. While I go to the goldsmith's house, go  
thou

And buy a rope's end : that will I bestow

Among my wife and her confederates,

For locking me out of my doors by day.

But, soft ! I see the goldsmith. Get thee gone ;

Buy thou a rope, and bring it home to me. 20

DRO. E. I buy a thousand pound a year : I buy a  
rope. [Exit.

ANT. E. A man is well help up that trusts to you :

I promised your presence and the chain ;

But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me.

Belike you thought our love would last too long,

If it were chain'd together, and therefore came not.

ANG. Saving your merry humour, here's the note

How much your chain weighs to the utmost carat,

The fineness of the gold, and chargeful fashion,

Which doth amount to three odd ducats more 30

Than I stand debted to this gentleman :

I pray you, see him presently discharged,

For he is bound to sea, and stays but for it.

---

21 *I buy . . . rope*] Dromio means that the purchase of a rope, where-  
with to execute his master's scheme of vengeance, is as grateful  
to him as the requisition of a large annuity.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS    ACT IV

---

ANT. E. I am not furnish'd with the present money ;  
Besides, I have some business in the town.  
Good signior, take the stranger to my house,  
And with you take the chain, and bid my wife  
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof :  
Perchance I will be there as soon as you.

ANG. Then you will bring the chain to her yourself? 40

ANT. E. No ; bear it with you, lest I come not time  
enough.

ANG. Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain about  
you ?

ANT. E. And if I have not, sir, I hope you have ;  
Or else you may return without your money.

ANG. Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain :  
Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman,  
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

ANT. E. Good Lord ! you use this dalliance to excuse  
Your breach of promise to the Porpentine.  
I should have chid you for not bringing it, 50  
But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl.

SEC. MER. The hour steals on ; I pray you, sir,  
dispatch.

ANG. You hear how he importunes me ; — the chain !

ANT. E. Why, give it to my wife, and fetch your  
money.

ANG. Come, come, you know I gave it you even now.  
Either send the chain, or send me by some token.

---

56 *send me by some token*] send me furnished with some token by way  
of warrant.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ANT. E. Fie, now you run this humour out of breath.  
Come, where's the chain? I pray you, let me see it.

SEC. MER. My business cannot brook this dalliance.  
Good sir, say whether you'll answer me or no: 60  
If not, I'll leave him to the officer.

ANT. E. I answer you! what should I answer you?

ANG. The money that you owe me for the chain.

ANT. E. I owe you none till I receive the chain.

ANG. You know I gave it you half an hour since.

ANT. E. You gave me none: you wrong me much  
to say so.

ANG. You wrong me more, sir, in denying it:  
Consider how it stands upon my credit.

SEC. MER. Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.

OFF. I do; and charge you in the duke's name to 70  
obey me.

ANG. This touches me in reputation.  
Either consent to pay this sum for me,  
Or I attach you by this officer.

ANT. E. Consent to pay thee that I never had!  
Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou darest.

ANG. Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer.  
I would not spare my brother in this case,  
If he should scorn me so apparently.

OFF. I do arrest you, sir: you hear the suit. 80

ANT. E. I do obey thee till I give thee bail.  
But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear  
As all the metal in your shop will answer.

ANG. Sir, sir, I shall have law in Ephesus,  
To your notorious shame; I doubt it not.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

---

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse, from the bay*

DRO. S. Master, there is a bark of Epidamnum  
That stays but till her owner comes aboard,  
And then, sir, she bears away. Our fraughtage, sir,  
I have convey'd aboard ; and I have bought  
The oil, the balsamum, and aqua-vitæ. 90  
The ship is in her trim ; the merry wind  
Blows fair from land : they stay for nought at all  
But for their owner, master, and yourself.

ANT. E. How now ! a madman ! Why, thou peevish  
sheep,

What ship of Epidamnum stays for me ?

DRO. S. A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.

ANT. E. Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for a rope,  
And told thee to what purpose and what end.

DRO. S. You sent me for a rope's end as soon :  
You sent me to the bay, sir, for a bark. 100

ANT. E. I will debate this matter at more leisure,  
And teach your ears to list me with more heed.  
To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight :  
Give her this key, and tell her, in the desk  
That 's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry  
There is a purse of ducats ; let her send it :  
Tell her I am arrested in the street,

---

94-95 *sheep . . . ship*] For confusion in pronunciation of these words,  
see note on *L. L. L.*, II, i, 218.

99 *a rope's end*] Steevens completed the metre by inserting *sir* after  
*end*, but Malone deemed *rope's* a dissyllable.



SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

And that shall bail me : hie thee, slave, be gone !  
On, officer, to prison till it come.

[*Exeunt Sec. Merchant, Angelo, Officer, and Ant. E.*

DRO. S. To Adriana ! that is where we dined, 110  
Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband :  
She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.  
Thither I must, although against my will,  
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil. [*Exit.*

SCENE II—THE HOUSE OF ANTIPHOLUS  
OF EPHEBUS

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*

ADR. Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so ?  
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye  
That he did plead in earnest ? yea or no ?  
Look'd he or red or pale, or sad or merrily ?  
What observation madest thou, in this case,  
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face ?

LUC. First he denied you had in him no right.

ADR. He meant he did me none ; the more my  
spite.

LUC. Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

ADR. And true he swore, though yet forsworn he  
were. 10

LUC. Then pleaded I for you.

---

111 *Dowsabel*] A common name for a country wench.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

---

ADR. And what said he ?

LUC. That love I begg'd for you he begg'd of me.

ADR. With what persuasion did he tempt thy love ?

LUC. With words that in an honest suit might move,  
First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.

ADR. Didst speak him fair ?

LUC. Have patience, I beseech.

ADR. I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still ;

My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.

He is deformed, crooked, old, and sere,

Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere ;

Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind ;

Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

LUC. Who would be jealous, then, of such a one ?  
No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

ADR. Ah, but I think him better than I say,

And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.

Far from her nest the lapwing cries away :

My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

DRO. S. Here ! go ; the desk, the purse ! sweet, now,  
make haste.

LUC. How hast thou lost thy breath ?

DRO. S. By running fast. 30

ADR. Where is thy master, Dromio ? is he well ?

---

27 *Far from her nest, etc.*] A very common proverbial expression. Cf. Lyly's *Campaspe*, II, ii, 12, 13: "You resemble the lapwing, who crieth most where her nest is not."

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. S. No, he 's in Tartar limbo, worse than hell.  
A devil in an everlasting garment hath him ;  
One whose hard heart is button'd up with steel ;  
A fiend, a fury, pitiless and rough ;  
A wolf, nay, worse ; a fellow all in buff ;  
A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper, one that countermands  
The passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands ;  
A hound that runs counter, and yet draws dry-foot well ;  
One that, before the Judgment, carries poor souls to hell. 40

ADR. Why, man, what is the matter ?

DRO. S. I do not know the matter : he is 'rested on  
the case.

ADR. What, is he arrested ? Tell me at whose suit.

DRO. S. I know not at whose suit he is arrested well ;  
But he 's in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that can  
I tell.

Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the money in  
his desk ?

---

32 *in Tartar limbo*] in gaol.

33 *A devil, etc.*] a bailiff or sergeant, whose buff jerkin was usually made of stuff called "durance," which was reputed never to wear out.

35 *fury*] Theobald's alteration of the old reading *fairy*, which is so often found in the sense of elf or hobgoblin that it might well be retained.

38 *lands*] Possibly *lands* is here identical with "launds," *i. e.* "glades." The rhyme forbids the acceptance of the alternative reading *lanes*.

39 *A hound that runs counter*] To "run counter" is to run backwards or on a false scent. Here there is a punning reference to the *counter*, *i. e.* prison whither the sergeant carried his victims. To "draw dry-foot" is to follow the scent on dry ground.

40 *hell*] a cant term for "prison."

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

ADR. Go fetch it, sister. [*Exit Luciana.*] This I wonder at,

That he, unknown to me, should be in debt.

Tell me, was he arrested on a band?

DRO. S. Not on a band, but on a stronger thing; 50  
A chain, a chain! Do you not hear it ring?

ADR. What, the chain?

DRO. S. No, no, the bell: 't is time that I were gone:  
It was two ere I left him, and now the clock strikes one.

ADR. The hours come back! that did I never hear.

DRO. S. O, yes; if any hour meet a sergeant, 'a  
turns back for very fear.

ADR. As if Time were in debt! how fondly dost  
thou reason!

DRO. S. Time is a very bankrupt, and owes more  
than he's worth to season.

Nay, he's a thief too: have you not heard men say,

That Time comes stealing on by night and day? 60

If Time be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in the way,

Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

*Re-enter LUCIANA with a purse*

ARD. Go, Dromio; there's the money, bear it straight;

And bring thy master home immediately.

Come, sister: I am press'd down with conceit, —

Conceit, my comfort and my injury. [*Exeunt.*]

49 *band*] bond. This form of the word is common, and the quibbling  
use of it, though feeble, is intelligible.

58 *season*] opportunity.

65 *conceit*] anxious thought.

SCENE III THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

SCENE III — A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter* ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse

ANT. S. There's not a man I meet but doth salute  
me  
As if I were their well-acquainted friend ;  
And every one doth call me by my name.  
Some tender money to me ; some invite me ;  
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses ;  
Some offer me commodities to buy :  
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,  
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,  
And therewithal took measure of my body.  
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles, 10  
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.

*Enter* DROMIO of Syracuse

DRO. S. Master, here's the gold you sent me for.  
What, have you got the picture of old Adam new-  
apparelled ?

ANT. S. What gold is this ? what Adam dost thou  
mean ?

DRO. S. Not that Adam that kept the Paradise, but

---

11 *Lapland sorcerers*] The inhabitants of Lapland were commonly re-  
puted to be sorcerers and witches. "Lapland witches," a common  
expression in Elizabethan writers, figures in Milton's *Paradise  
Lost*, II, 665.

13 *have you . . . old Adam*] Theobald reads, *have you got rid of*, etc.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

that Adam that keeps the prison : he that goes in the calf's skin that was killed for the Prodigal ; he that came behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

ANT. S. I understand thee not.

DRO. S. No? why, 't is a plain case : he that went, <sup>20</sup> like a base-viol, in a case of leather ; the man, sir, that, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a sob, and 'rests them ; he, sir, that takes pity on decayed men, and gives them suits of durance ; he that sets up his rest to do more exploits with his mace than a morris-pike.

ANT. S. What, thou meanest an officer ?

DRO. S. Ay, sir, the sergeant of the band ; he that brings any man to answer it that breaks his band ; one that thinks a man always going to bed, and says, " God give you good rest ! " <sup>30</sup>

ANT. S. Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is there any ship puts forth to-night ? may we be gone ?

DRO. S. Why, sir, I brought you word an hour since, that the bark Expedition put forth to-night ; and then were you hindered by the sergeant, to tarry for the hoy

---

Dromio's inquiry is clearly equivalent to "What has become of the sergeant?" Dromio is asking in quibbling fashion where the stout corporeal presence of old leather-clad Adam, as he playfully calls the sergeant, has got to.

<sup>22</sup> *gives . . . sob*] causes them a convulsive sigh. This is the reading of the Folios, which Rowe changed to *fob*, assigning to that word the unsupported meaning of "tap," or "light blow."

<sup>24</sup> *durance*] See note on IV, ii, 33. There is a quibble on the sense of *durance*, *i. e.* prison. The word also means cloth that does not wear out.

SCENE III THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Delay. Here are the angels that you sent for to deliver you.

ANT. S. The fellow is distract, and so am I ;  
And here we wander in illusions :  
Some blessed power deliver us from hence !

*Enter a Courtezan*

COUR. Well met, well met, Master Antipholus, 40  
I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now :  
Is that the chain you promised me to-day ?

ANT. S. Satan, avoid ! I charge thee, tempt me not.

DRO. S. Master, is this Mistress Satan ?

ANT. S. It is the devil.

DRO. S. Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's dam ;  
and here she comes in the habit of a light wench : and  
thereof comes that the wenches say, " God damn me ;"  
that's as much to say, " God make me a light wench."  
It is written, they appear to men like angels of light : 50  
light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn ; ergo, light  
wenches will burn. Come not near her.

COUR. Your man and you are marvellous merry, sir.  
Will you go with me ? We'll mend our dinner here ?

DRO. S. Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat ; or  
bespeak a long spoon.

ANT. S. Why, Dromio ?

DRO. S. Marry, he must have a long spoon that must  
eat with the devil.

---

54 *We'll mend, etc.*] We'll improve, make some addition to.

56 *a long spoon*] This proverb is alluded to again in the *Tempest*, II, ii, 103.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

---

ANT. S. Avoid then, fiend! what tell'st thou me of  
supping? 60

Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress :  
I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

COUR. Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,  
Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised,  
And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

DRO. S. Some devils ask but the parings of one's  
nail,  
A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,  
A nut, a cherry-stone ;  
But she, more covetous, would have a chain.  
Master, be wise : an if you give it her, 70  
The devil will shake her chain, and fright us with it.

COUR. I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain :  
I hope you do not mean to cheat me so.

ANT. S. Avaunt, thou witch! Come, Dromio, let  
us go.

DRO. S. "Fly pride," says the peacock : mistress, that  
you know. [*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S.*]

COUR. Now, out of doubt Antipholus is mad,  
Else would he never so demean himself.  
A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,  
And for the same he promised me a chain :  
Both one and other he denies me now. 80  
The reason that I gather he is mad,  
Besides this present instance of his rage,  
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,  
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.  
Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,



SCENE IV THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

On purpose shut the doors against his way.  
My way is now to hie home to his house,  
And tell his wife that, being lunatic,  
He rush'd into my house, and took perforce  
My ring away. This course I fittest choose ; 90  
For forty ducats is too much to lose. [Exit.

SCENE IV—A STREET

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and the Officer*

ANT. E. Fear me not, man ; I will not break away :  
I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,  
To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.  
My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,  
And will not lightly trust the messenger.  
That I should be attach'd in Ephesus,  
I tell you, 't will sound harshly in her ears.

*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus with a rope's-end*

Here comes my man ; I think he brings the money.  
How now, sir ! have you that I sent you for ?  
DRO. E. Here 's that, I warrant you, will pay them all. 10  
ANT. E. But where 's the money ?  
DRO. E. Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.  
ANT. E. Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope ?  
DRO. E. I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.  
ANT. E. To what end did I bid thee hie thee home ?  
DRO. E. To a rope's-end, sir ; and to that end am I  
returned.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

---

ANT. E. And to that end, sir, I will welcome you.

[*Beating him.*]

OFF. Good sir, be patient.

DRO. E. Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in  
adversity. 20

OFF. Good now, hold thy tongue.

DRO. E. Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.

ANT. E. Thou whoreson, senseless villain!

DRO. E. I would I were senseless, sir, that I might  
not feel your blows.

ANT. E. Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and  
so is an ass.

DRO. E. I am an ass, indeed; you may prove it by  
my long ears. I have served him from the hour of my  
nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands <sup>30</sup>  
for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats  
me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with  
beating; I am waked with it when I sleep; raised with  
it when I sit; driven out of doors with it when I go  
from home; welcomed home with it when I return:  
nay, I bear it on my shoulders, as a beggar wont her  
brat; and, I think, when he hath lamed me, I shall beg  
with it from door to door.

ANT. E. Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.

*Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan, and PINCH*

DRO. E. Mistress, "respice finem," respect your end;  
or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, "beware the <sup>40</sup>  
rope's-end."

<sup>40</sup> *the prophecy*] This is the Folio reading. Dyce reads *to prophesy*,  
which somewhat improves the construction, and may be right.

SCENE IV THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ANT. E. Wilt thou still talk ? [Beating him.]

COUR. How say you now ? is not your husband mad ?

ADR. His incivility confirms no less.

Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer ;

Establish him in his true sense again,

And I will please you what you will demand.

LUC. Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks !

COUR. Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy !

PINCH. Give me your hand, and let me feel your pulse.

ANT. E. There is my hand, and let it feel your ear. 50

[Striking him.]

PINCH. I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,  
To yield possession to my holy prayers,

And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight :

I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven !

ANT. E. Peace, doting wizzard, peace ! I am not mad.

ADR. O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul !

ANT. E. You minion, you, are these your customers ?

Did this companion with the saffron face

Revel and feast it at my house to-day,

Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut, 60

And I denied to enter in my house ?

ADR. O husband, God doth know you dined at home ;

Where would you had remain'd until this time,

Free from these slanders and this open shame !

---

46 *please you*] gratify you by paying.

48 *trembles in his ecstasy*] Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 895 : "Thus stands she in a *trembling ecstasy*."

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

---

ANT. E. Dined at home ! Thou villain, what sayest thou ?

DRO. E. Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.

ANT. E. Were not my doors lock'd up, and I shut out ?

DRO. E. Perdie, your doors were lock'd, and you shut out.

ANT. E. And did not she herself revile me there ?

DRO. E. Sans fable, she herself reviled you there. 70

ANT. E. Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me ?

DRO. E. Certes, she did ; the kitchen-vestal scorn'd you.

ANT. E. And did not I in rage depart from thence ?

DRO. E. In verity you did ; my bones bear witness,

That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

ADR. Is 't good to soothe him in these contraries ?

PINCH. It is no shame : the fellow finds his vein,  
And, yielding to him, humours well his frenzy.

ANT. E. Thou hast suborn'd the goldsmith to arrest me.

ADR. Alas, I sent you money to redeem you, 80  
By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

DRO. E. Money by me ! heart and good-will you might ;

But surely, master, not a rag of money.

ANT. E. Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats ?

SCENE IV THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ADR. He came to me, and I deliver'd it.

LUC. And I am witness with her that she did.

DRO. E. God and the rope-maker bear me witness  
That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

PINCH. Mistress, both man and master is pos-  
sess'd;

I know it by their pale and deadly looks : 90  
They must be bound, and laid in some dark room.

ANT. E. Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth  
to-day?

And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

ADR. I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth.

DRO. E. And, gentle master, I received no gold ;  
But I confess, sir, that we were lock'd out.

ADR. Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.

ANT. E. Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all,  
And art confederate with a damned pack  
To make a loathsome abject scorn of me : 100  
But with these nails I 'll pluck out these false eyes,  
That would behold in me this shameful sport.

*Enter three or four, and offer to bind him. He strives*

ADR. O, bind him, bind him! let him not come  
near me.

PINCH. More company! The fiend is strong within  
him.

LUC. Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he looks!

ANT. E. What, will you murder me? Thou gaoler,  
thou,

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

---

I am thy prisoner: wilt thou suffer them  
To make a rescue?

OFF. Masters, let him go:  
He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

PINCH. Go bind this man, for he is frantic too. 110  
[*They offer to bind Dro. E.*]

ADR. What wilt thou do, thou peevish officer?  
Hast thou delight to see a wretched man  
Do outrage and displeasure to himself?

OFF. He is my prisoner: if I let him go,  
The debt he owes will be required of me.

ADR. I will discharge thee ere I go from thee:  
Bear me forthwith unto his creditor,  
And, knowing how the debt grows, I will pay it.  
Good master doctor, see him safe convey'd  
Home to my house. O most unhappy day! 120

ANT. E. O most unhappy strumpet!

DRO. E. Master, I am here enter'd in bond for  
you.

ANT. E. Out on thee, villain! wherefore dost thou  
mad me?

DRO. E. Will you be bound for nothing? be mad,  
good master: cry, The devil!

LUC. God help, poor souls, how idly do they talk!

ADR. Go bear him hence. Sister, go you with me.

[*Exeunt all but Adriana, Luciana, Officer and Courtezan.*]

Say now; whose suit is he arrested at?

OFF. One Angelo, a goldsmith: do you know  
him?

ADR. I know the man. What is the sum he owes? 130

SCENE IV THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

OFF. Two hundred ducats.

ADR. Say, how grows it due?

OFF. Due for a chain your husband had of him.

ADR. He did bespeak a chain for me, but had it not.

COUR. When as your husband, all in rage, to-day  
Came to my house, and took away my ring, —  
The ring I saw upon his finger now, —  
Straight after did I meet him with a chain.

ADR. It may be so, but I did never see it.  
Come, gaoler, bring me where the goldsmith is:  
I long to know the truth hereof at large.

140

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse with his rapier drawn,  
and DROMIO of Syracuse*

LUC. God, for thy mercy! they are loose again.

ADR. And come with naked swords.

Let's call more help to have them bound again.

OFF. Away! they'll kill us.

*[Exeunt all but Ant. S. and Dro. S.]*

ANT. S. I see these witches are afraid of swords.

DRO. S. She that would be your wife now ran from  
you.

ANT. S. Come to the Centaur; fetch our stuff from  
thence:

I long that we were safe and sound aboard.

148

DRO. S. Faith, stay here this night; they will surely  
do us no harm: you saw they speak us fair, give us  
gold: methinks they are such a gentle nation, that, but

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

---

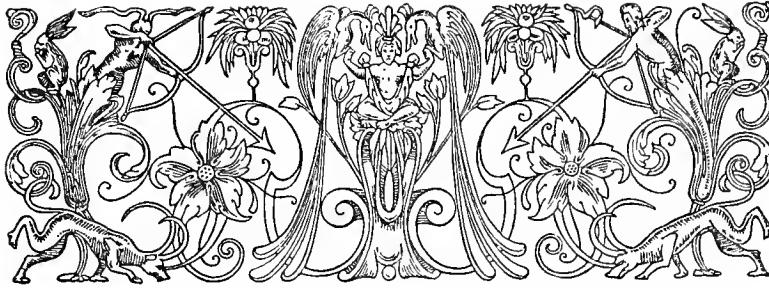
for the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of me, I could find in my heart to stay here still, and turn witch.

ANT. S. I will not stay to-night for all the town ;  
Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard. [Exeunt.

---

155 *stuff*] baggage. Shakespeare uses the word in this sense only here, in V, i, 408, *infra*, and in *Pericles*, IV, ii, 19. It appears in W. W.'s translation of Plautus' *Menæchmi*: "Ile go strait to the inne, and deliver up my accounts, and all your *stuffe*."

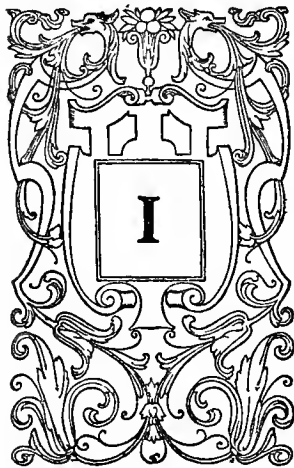




ACT FIFTH—SCENE I  
*A STREET BEFORE A PRIORY*

*Enter Second Merchant and ANGELO*

ANGELO



AM SORRY, SIR, THAT  
I have hinder'd you ;  
But, I protest, he had the chain  
of me,  
Though most dishonestly he doth  
deny it.

SEC. MER. How is the man  
esteem'd here in the city ?

ANG. Of very reverent repu-  
tation, sir,  
Of credit infinite, highly beloved,  
Second to none that lives here  
in the city :

His word might bear my wealth at any time.

SEC. MER. Speak softly : yonder, as I think, he walks.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse and DROMIO of Syracuse*

ANG. 'T is so ; and that self chain about his neck, 10  
Which he forswore most monstrously to have.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT V

---

Good sir, draw near to me, I'll speak to him ;  
Signior Antipholus, I wonder much  
That you would put me to this shame and trouble ;  
And, not without some scandal to yourself,  
With circumstance and oaths so to deny  
This chain which now you wear so openly :  
Beside the charge, the shame, imprisonment,  
You have done wrong to this my honest friend ;  
Who, but for staying on our controversy, 20  
Had hoisted sail and put to sea to-day :  
This chain you had of me ; can you deny it ?

ANT. S. I think I had ; I never did deny it.

SEC. MER. Yes, that you did, sir, and forswore it too.

ANT. S. Who heard me to deny it or forswear it ?

SEC. MER. These ears of mine, thou know'st, did  
hear thee.

Fie on thee, wretch ! 't is pity that thou livest  
To walk where any honest men resort.

ANT. S. Thou art a villain to impeach me thus :

I'll prove mine honour and mine honesty 30  
Against thee presently, if thou darest stand.

SEC. MER. I dare, and do defy thee for a villain.

[*They draw.*]

*Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan, and others*

ADR. Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake ! he is mad.  
Some get within him, take his sword away :  
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

---

34 *within him*] at close quarters with him.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. S. Run, master, run ; for God's sake, take a  
house !  
This is some priory. In, or we are spoiled !  
[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S. to the Priory.*

*Enter the Lady Abbess*

ABB. Be quiet, people. Wherefore throng you  
hither ?  
ADR. To fetch my poor distracted husband hence.  
Let us come in, that we may bind him fast, 40  
And bear him home for his recovery.  
ANG. I knew he was not in his perfect wits.  
SEC. MER. I am sorry now that I did draw on him.  
ABB. How long hath this possession held the man ?  
ADR. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,  
And much different from the man he was ;  
But till this afternoon his passion  
Ne'er break into extremity of rage.  
ABB. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of  
sea ?  
Buried some dear friend ? Hath not else his eye 50  
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love ?  
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,  
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.  
Which of these sorrows is he subject to ?

---

36 *take a house*] enter, as in the phrase "a dog takes the water."

46 *much*] The Second Folio improves the metre by reading *much*  
*much*. The reading is worth adoption.

51 *Stray'd his affection*] Caused to stray, led astray ; the transitive use  
of the word is extremely rare, if not unique.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT V

---

ADR. To none of these, except it be the last ;  
Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.  
ABB. You should for that have reprehended him.  
ADR. Why, so I did.  
ABB. Ay, but not rough enough.  
ADR. As roughly as my modesty would let me.  
ABB. Haply, in private.  
ADR. And in assemblies too. 60  
ABB. Ay, but not enough.  
ADR. It was the copy of our conference :  
In bed, he slept not for my urging it ;  
At board, he fed not for my urging it ;  
Alone, it was the subject of my theme ;  
In company I often glanced it ;  
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.  
ABB. And thereof came it that the man was mad.  
The venom clamours of a jealous woman  
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth. 70  
It seems his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing :  
And thereof comes it that his head is light.  
Thou say'st his meat was sauced with thy upbraid-  
ings :  
Unquiet meals make ill digestions ;  
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred ;  
And what's a fever but a fit of madness ?  
Thou say'st his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls :

---

62 *copy*] repeated theme.

69 *venom*] The noun is constantly used adjectivally for "venomous."

Cf. *Rich. III*, I, iii, 291 : "His *venom* tooth."

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue  
But moody and dull melancholy,  
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair ; 80  
And at her heels a huge infectious troop  
Of pale distemperatures and foes to life ?  
In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest  
To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast :  
The consequence is, then, thy jealous fits  
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

LUC. She never reprehended him but mildly,  
When he demean'd himself rough, rude, and wildly.  
Why bear you these rebukes, and answer not ?

ADR. She did betray me to my own reproof. 90  
Good people, enter, and lay hold on him.

ABB. No, not a creature enters in my house.

ADR. Then let your servants bring my husband  
forth.

ABB. Neither : he took this place for sanctuary,  
And it shall privilege him from your hands  
Till I have brought him to his wits again,  
Or lose my labour in assaying it.

ADR. I will attend my husband, be his nurse,  
Diet his sickness, for it is my office,  
And will have no attorney but myself ; 100  
And therefore let me have him home with me.

---

79 *moody, etc.*] The line is defective. Suggested interpolations are "sadness" or "madness" after "moody," of which the latter is the more reasonable. Others insert "moping" after "moody," or substitute "dull-visaged" for "dull."



SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Against the laws and statutes of this town,  
Beheaded publicly for his offence.

ANG. See where they come : we will behold his death.

LUC. Kneel to the Duke before he pass the abbey.

*Enter DUKE, attended; ÆGEON bareheaded; with the Headsman  
and other Officers*

DUKE. Yet once again proclaim it publicly, 130  
If any friend will pay the sum for him,  
He shall not die ; so much we tender him.

ADR. Justice, most sacred Duke, against the abbess !

DUKE. She is a virtuous and a reverend lady :  
It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.

ADR. May it please your Grace, Antipholus my hus-  
band, —

Whom I made lord of me and all I had,  
At your important letters, — this ill day  
A most outrageous fit of madness took him ;  
That desperately he hurried through the street, — 140  
With him his bondman, all as mad as he, —  
Doing displeasure to the citizens  
By rushing in their houses, bearing thence  
Rings, jewels, any thing his rage did like.  
Once did I get him bound, and sent him home,  
Whilst to take order for the wrongs I went,  
That here and there his fury had committed.

---

146 *take order for*] take measures for settling, or dealing with. Cf.  
*Rich. III*, IV, ii, 53 : “ I will *take order for* her keeping close.”

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT V

---

Anon, I wot not by what strong escape,  
He broke from those that had the guard of him ;  
And with his mad attendant and himself, 150  
Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,  
Met us again, and, madly bent on us,  
Chased us away ; till, raising of more aid,  
We came again to bind them. Then they fled  
Into this abbey, whither we pursued them ;  
And here the abbess shuts the gates on us,  
And will not suffer us to fetch him out,  
Nor send him forth, that we may bear him hence.  
Therefore, most gracious Duke, with thy command  
Let him be brought forth, and borne hence for help. 160  
DUKE. Long since thy husband served me in my wars ;  
And I to thee engaged a prince's word,  
When thou didst make him master of thy bed,  
To do him all the grace and good I could.  
Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate,  
And bid the lady abbess come to me.  
I will determine this before I stir.

*Enter a Servant*

SERV. O mistress, mistress, shift and save yourself !  
My master and his man are both broke loose,  
Beaten the maids a-row, and bound the doctor, 170  
Whose beard they have singed off with brands of fire ;  
And ever, as it blazed, they threw on him  
Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair :

---

148 *strong escape*] escape effected by strength.



SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

My master preaches patience to him, and the while  
His man with scissors nicks him like a fool ;  
And sure, unless you send some present help,  
Between them they will kill the conjurer.

ADR. Peace, fool ! thy master and his man are here ;  
And that is false thou dost report to us.

SERV. Mistress, upon my life, I tell you true ; 180  
I have not breathed almost since I did see it.  
He cries for you, and vows, if he can take you,  
To scorch your face and to disfigure you. [*Cry within.*  
Hark, hark ! I hear him, mistress : fly, be gone !

DUKE. Come, stand by me ; fear nothing. Guard  
with halberds !

ADR. Ay me, it is my husband ! Witness you,  
That he is borne about invisible :  
Even now we housed him in the abbey here ;  
And now he 's there, past thought of human reason

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of Ephesus*

ANT. E. Justice, most gracious Duke, O, grant me  
justice! 190

Even for the service that long since I did thee,  
When I bestrid thee in the wars, and took  
Deep scars to save thy life ; even for the blood  
That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

---

175 *nicks*] clips or crops close. It seems to have been the customary way in which fools' hair was cut.

192 *bestrid*] stood over thee when fallen, protected thee. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, V, i, 122 : "If thou see down in the battle, and *bestride* me, so : 't is a point of friendship."

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT V

---

ÆGE. Unless the fear of death doth make me dote,  
I see my son Antipholus, and Dromio.

ANT. E. Justice, sweet prince, against that woman  
there!

She whom thou gavest to me to be my wife,  
That hath abused and dishonour'd me

Even in the strength and height of injury : 200  
Beyond imagination is the wrong  
That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

DUKE. Discover how, and thou shalt find me just.

ANT. E. This day, great Duke, she shut the doors  
upon me,

While she with harlots feasted in my house.

DUKE. A grievous fault! Say, woman, didst thou so?

ADR. No, my good lord: myself, he and my sister  
To-day did dine together. So befall my soul  
As this is false he burthens me withal!

LUC. Ne'er may I look on day, nor sleep on night, 210  
But she tells to your Highness simple truth!

ANG. O perjured woman! They are both forsworn:  
In this the madman justly chargeth them.

ANT. E. My liege, I am advised what I say;

Neither disturbed with the effect of wine,  
Nor heady-rash, provoked with raging ire,  
Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.

This woman lock'd me out this day from dinner:  
That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd with her,

Could witness it, for he was with me then; 220

---

205 *harlots*] a common term of reproach often applied to rascally men  
as well as to wanton women.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,  
Promising to bring it to the Porpentine,  
Where Balthazar and I did dine together.  
Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,  
I went to seek him : in the street I met him,  
And in his company that gentleman.  
There did this perjured goldsmith swear me down  
That I this day of him received the chain,  
Which, God he knows, I saw not : for the which  
He did arrest me with an officer. 230  
I did obey ; and sent my peasant home  
For certain ducats : he with none return'd.  
Then fairly I bespoke the officer  
To go in person with me to my house.  
By the way we met my wife, her sister, and a rabble more  
Of vile confederates. Along with them  
They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain,  
A mere anatomy, a mountebank,  
A threadbare juggler, and a fortune-teller,  
A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch, 240  
A living dead man : this pernicious slave,  
Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer ;  
And, gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,  
And with no face, as 't were, outfacing me,  
Cries out, I was possess'd. Then all together  
They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence,  
And in a dark and dankish vault at home

---

246 *They fell upon me*] The ordinary contemporary method of dealing  
with lunatics. Cf. the treatment of Malvolio in *Tw. Night*,  
III, iv.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT V

There left me and my man, both bound together ;  
Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,  
I gain'd my freedom, and immediately 250  
Ran hither to your Grace ; whom I beseech  
To give me ample satisfaction  
For these deep shames and great indignities.

ANG. My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with him,  
That he dined not at home, but was lock'd out.

DUKE. But had he such a chain of thee or no ?

ANG. He had, my lord : and when he ran in here,  
These people saw the chain about his neck.

SEC. MER. Besides, I will be sworn these ears of mine  
Heard you confess you had the chain of him, 260  
After you first forswore it on the mart :  
And thereupon I drew my sword on you ;  
And then you fled into this abbey here,  
From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.

ANT. E. I never came within these abbey-walls ;  
Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me :  
I never saw the chain, so help me Heaven !  
And this is false you burthen me withal.

DUKE. Why, what an intricate impeach is this !  
I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup. 270  
If here you housed him, here he would have been ;  
If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly :  
You say he dined at home ; the goldsmith here  
Denies that saying. Sirrah, what say you ?

DRO. E. Sir, he dined with her there, at the Por-  
pentine.

COUR. He did ; and from my finger snatch'd that ring.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ANT. E. 'T is true, my liege ; this ring I had of her.

DUKE. Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey here ?

COUR. As sure, my liege, as I do see your Grace.

DUKE. Why, this is strange. Go call the abness  
hither. 280

I think you are all mated, or stark mad.

*[Exit one to the Abbess.]*

ÆGE. Most mighty Duke, vouchsafe me speak a word :  
Haply I see a friend will save my life,  
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

DUKE. Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou wilt.

ÆGE. Is not your name, sir, call'd Antipholus ?  
And is not that your bondman, Dromio ?

DRO. E. Within this hour I was his bondman, sir,  
But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords :  
Now am I Dromio, and his man unbound. 290

ÆGE. I am sure you both of you remember me.

DRO. E. Ourselves we do remember, sir, by you ;  
For lately we were bound, as you are now.  
You are not Pinch's patient, are you, sir ?

ÆGE. Why look you strange on me ? you know me  
well.

ANT. E. I never saw you in my life till now.

ÆGE. O, grief hath changed me since you saw me last,  
And careful hours with time's deformed hand  
Have written strange defeatures in my face :  
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice ? 300

281 *mated*] See note on III, ii, 54, *supra*.

298 *careful hours*] hours full of care, anxiety, sorrow.

299 *defeatures*] See note on II, i, 98, *supra*.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT V

---

ANT. E. Neither.

ÆGE. Dromio, nor thou ?

DRO. E. No, trust me, sir, nor I.

ÆGE. I am sure thou dost.

DRO. E. Ay, sir, but I am sure I do not ; and whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him.

ÆGE. Not know my voice ! O time's extremity,  
Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor tongue  
In seven short years, that here my only son  
Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares ?  
Though now this grained face of mine be hid 310  
In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,  
And all the conduits of my blood froze up,  
Yet hath my night of life some memory,  
My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left,  
My dull deaf ears a little use to hear :  
All these old witnesses — I cannot err —  
Tell me thou art my son Antipholus.

ANT. E. I never saw my father in my life.

ÆGE. But seven years since, in Syracuse, boy,  
Thou know'st we parted : but perhaps, my son, 320  
Thou shamest to acknowledge me in misery.

ANT. E. The Duke and all that know me in the city  
Can witness with me that it is not so :  
I ne'er saw Syracuse in my life.

DUKE. I tell thee, Syracusian, twenty years  
Have I been patron to Antipholus,

---

309 *my feeble key, etc.*] my weak and discordant tone of voice which is caused by my griefs.

310 *grained*] furrowed like the grain of wood.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

During which time he ne'er saw Syracuse :  
I see thy age and dangers make thee dote.

*Re-enter Abbess, with ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse and DROMIO  
of Syracuse*

ABB. Most mighty Duke, behold a man much  
wrong'd. [*All gather to see them.*]

ADR. I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me. 330

DUKE. One of these men is Genius to the other ;  
And so of these. Which is the natural man,  
And which the spirit ? who deciphers them ?

DRO. S. I, sir, am Dromio : command him away.

DRO. E. I, sir, am Dromio ; pray, let me stay.

ANT. S. Ægeon art thou not ? or else his ghost ?

DRO. S. O, my old master ! who hath bound him  
here ?

ABB. Whoever bound him, I will loose his bonds,  
And gain a husband by his liberty.

Speak, old Ægeon, if thou be'st the man

340

That hadst a wife once call'd Æmilia,  
That bore thee at a burthen two fair sons :  
O, if thou be'st the same Ægeon, speak,  
And speak unto the same Æmilia !

ÆGE. If I dream not, thou art Æmilia :  
If thou art she, tell me, where is that son  
That floated with thee on the fatal raft ?

ABB. By men of Epidamnum he and I  
And the twin Dromio, all were taken up ;

---

331 *Genius*] guardian angel or spirit.





SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Did call me brother. [*To Luciana*] What I told you then,  
I hope I shall have leisure to make good ;  
If this be not a dream I see and hear.

ANG. That is the chain, sir, which you had of me.

ANT. S. I think it be, sir ; I deny it not.

ANT. E. And you, sir, for this chain arrested me.

ANG. I think I did, sir ; I deny it not.

ADR. I sent you money, sir, to be your bail, 380  
By Dromio ; but I think he brought it not.

DRO. E. No, none by me.

ANT. S. This purse of ducats I received from you,  
And Dromio my man did bring them me.  
I see we still did meet each other's man ;  
And I was ta'en for him, and he for me ;  
And thereupon these ERRORS are arose.

ANT. E. These ducats pawn I for my father here.

DUKE. It shall not need ; thy father hath his life.

COUR. Sir, I must have that diamond from you. 390  
ANT. E. There, take it ; and much thanks for my good  
cheer.

ABB. Renowned Duke, vouchsafe to take the pains  
To go with us into the abbey here,  
And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes :  
And all that are assembled in this place,  
That by this sympathized one day's error  
Have suffer'd wrong, go keep us company,  
And we shall make full satisfaction.  
Thirty-three years have I but gone in travail  
Of you, my sons ; and till this present hour 400  
My heavy burthen ne'er delivered.

The Duke, my husband, and my children both,  
 And you the calendars of their nativity,  
 Go to a gossips' feast, and go with me ;  
 After so long grief, such nativity !

DUKE. With all my heart, I'll gossip at this feast.

[*Exeunt all but Ant. S., Ant. E., Dro. S., and Dro. E.*]

DRO. S. Master, shall I fetch your stuff from ship-  
 board ?

ANT. E. Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou  
 embark'd ?

DRO. S. Your goods that lay at host, sir, in the  
 Centaur.

ANT. S. He speaks to me. I am your master,  
 Dromio :

410

Come, go with us ; we'll look to that anon :

Embrace thy brother there ; rejoice with him.

[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Ant. E.*]

DRO. S. There is a fat friend at your master's house,  
 That kitchen'd me for you to-day at dinner :  
 She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

DRO. E. Methinks you are my glass, and not my  
 brother :

404, 406 *gossips' feast*] feast given to the sponsors at a christening.

405 *such nativity*] Thus the old reading. Hanmer substituted *felicity*  
 and later editors *festivity*, in the belief that "nativity" was a  
 printer's repetition, through an error of vision, of "nativity," the  
 last word of line 403. But "nativity" harmonises somewhat  
 better with the twice repeated reference to "gossips," *i. e.*  
 sponsors at a christening.

407-408 *stuff*] See note on IV, iv, 155, *supra*.

409 *lay at host*] were lodged or stored.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth.

Will you walk in to see their gossiping ?

DRO. S. Not I, sir ; you are my elder.

DRO. E. That's a question : how shall we try it ? 420

DRO. S. We'll draw cuts for the senior : till then  
lead thou first.

DRO. E. Nay, then, thus :

We came into the world like brother and brother ;

And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

*[Exeunt.]*



















